

Mystical Verses of Lallā

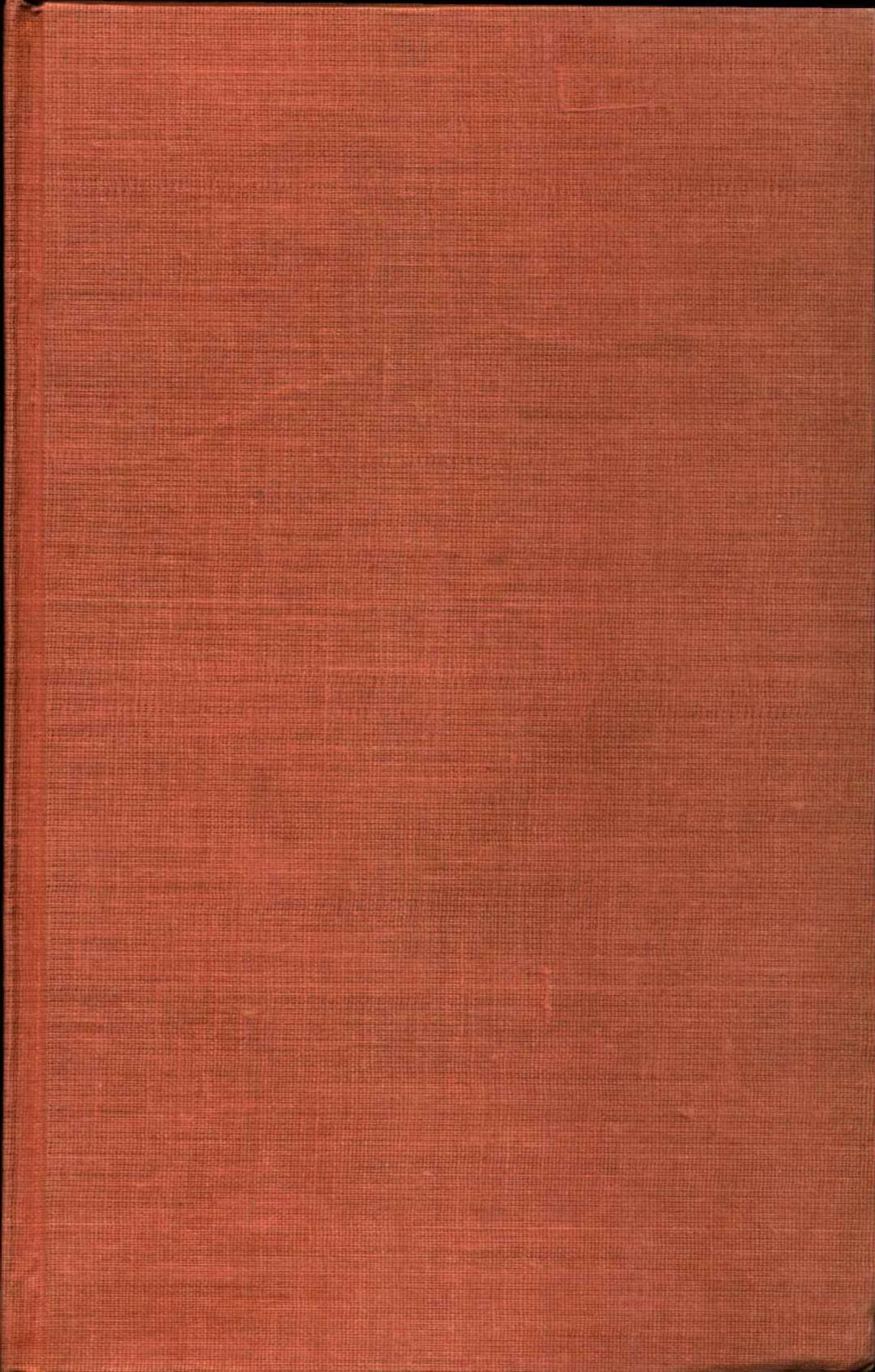
A Journey of Self Realization



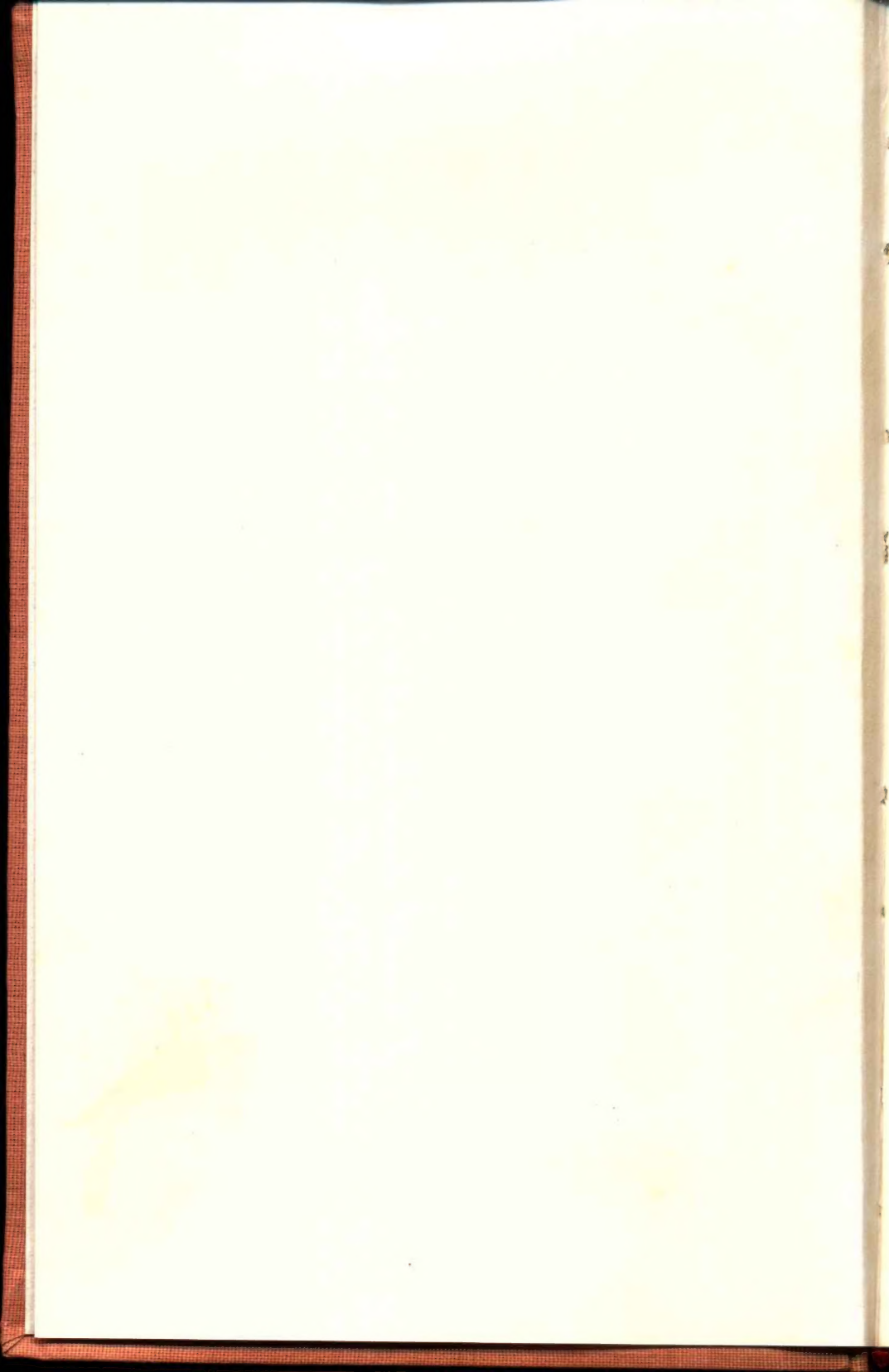
Translated with an Introduction
by

JAISHREE KAK

Illustrations by Joseph Singer



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Table of Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>IX</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
Lalla-Vākh: The Text	1
Life and Legends	3
Exploring the Inner Landscape	14
Teachings	17
Key to Pronunciation	21
Lallā's Verses	23
The River of Life	25
Crossing the River	40
The Field of Void	55
A Lotus Blooms	68
The Light of Consciousness	80
The House of Nectar	102
The Wine of Lallā's Verses	132
Words of Wisdom	151
Appendix	191
Lallā and the Kashmīrī Śaiva Tradition	193
Concordance of Various Lallā Collections	214
<i>Bibliography</i>	<i>219</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>225</i>



Preface

Growing up in Kashmīr, I have memories of spectacular Himalayan mountains, magnificent lakes, and countless rivers snaking through the valley, and accompanying all is the echoing on festive occasions of the melodious singing of Lallā's verse-sayings, popularly known as *Lalla-Vākh*. Her outpourings are timeless and people of all faiths have treasured them. The oral transmission for centuries illustrates the extent to which she has been a part of folk memory. My old aunts who grew up in Kashmīr have memories of women reciting Lallā's verses while they spun fine shawls at the spinning wheel. Over the centuries, Lallā became the wise woman of Kashmīrī culture. She was invoked not only at moments of personal dilemma but also to celebrate moments of social togetherness. I myself remember my mother singing Lallā's verses and occasionally quoting them in her conversations.

Lallā's verses provide a revealing glimpse into her life, serving as a vehicle for the reader to participate in her most profound spiritual and emotional experiences. Her entire oeuvre presents different stages of her journey to achieve mystic communion with her higher Self or Śiva. Some of her verses deal with the early stages of her quest as she prepares her mind and body for a long and arduous journey through the inner landscape of mind. Others describe the advanced stages of her practice with sustained introspective contemplation, and yet others are uttered in the form of teachings to her community. Lallā's most profound verses are unmediated visions as she pours out her experiences into words.

Each verse, consisting of four lines, usually stands as an independent unit, though some are written as questions and answers. In translating verses, I have followed the originals as closely as possible in order to retain the spirit of Lallā's verses. I have tried to reproduce into translated language the inner form and rhythm of the originals in Kashmīrī, as I see them, by playing with punctuations, phrase breaks and line breaks. Accordingly, even though each original verse is four lines long, some of the translated verses are longer. The original Kashmīrī verse in Devanāgarī script accompanies each translated verse.

The present collection is a revised translation of the verses published in *To the Other Shore*, a critical study of Lallā's life and verses. This volume has been specifically prepared for different types of readers, especially the non-specialist. The readers interested only in Lallā's poetic outpourings have the English translations. Those proficient in the Kashmīrī language can read the English translations with the originals in Kashmīrī. A key to pronunciation of Kashmīrī written in Devanāgarī script is provided for such readers. The collection also comes with a concordance of verses in various Lallā collections toward the end of the volume. For readers who wish to explore the Kashmīrī Śaiva philosophy that permeates Lallā's verses, a basic introduction to this thought system and its relevance to Lallā's verses is given in the appendix.

The preparation of this collection of verses has been a long journey, which started decades ago in Kashmīr when I had the good fortune of meeting the late Kashmīrī Śaiva scholar and teacher Swami Lakshman Jee. He ignited the spark. Many years later, the spark blossomed into a deep desire to work on Lallā's verses, which became an anchor around which my study of the Kashmīrī Śaiva tradition took shape. In this endeavour, I acknowledge the support of my family and friends, both old and new. I owe a special gratitude to my late father Ram Nath Kak who went over my translation of the verses and shared with me his unique knowledge of

the Śaiva tradition. This project would have been inconceivable without my mother Sarojini Kak who told me fascinating stories and legends about Lallā as I was growing up in Kashmīr.

I especially feel honored by the contribution of Joseph Singer, an artist, photographer and printmaker. Singer brings to life essential themes of Lallā's life and poetry as he pours her vision into illustrations. His prints and drawings complement the verses, even entering into a conversation with them, thus providing visual pathways into the verses. Singer weaves a bridge between western and eastern sensibilities by translating the verses into a contemporary visual medium. Finally, I acknowledge the continuous support of my dear friend and colleague Kathy Phillips as she went over each verse with me to see if the original Kashmīrī verse was translated in the best possible way within the constraints imposed by another language and another culture. She has my warm thanks.



Introduction

The fourteenth-century mystic poet Lallā, also known as Lalleśvarī and Lal Dēd, is an integral part of Kashmīrī language, literature, and culture. *Lalla-Vākh*¹ or Lallā's verse-sayings have resonated orally for centuries in the valley of Kashmīr. Lallā has been compared to Shakespeare, Hafiz, Kabir and Tulsidasa. And, she has been honored as the first Kashmīrī poet who modernized Kashmīrī language as well as literature. Her richness of language, turn of phrases, and metaphors are now standard expressions in modern Kashmīrī.

Lalla-Vākh: The Text

Lallā's compositions come to us in a form that is fairly modern, except for occasional archaic expressions with obscure or unknown meaning. As is common with the prolonged transmission of any oral tradition, it is hard to imagine that her verses have come to us in this century without any change. However, the interpolations and changes were probably minimal because of a very strong oral tradition in medieval Kashmīr where some families specialized in rote memorization of texts passed on from teacher to disciple, or within the family from one generation to another. One such oral recension by an old Brāhmin Dharmadāsa Darwēsh of the village Gush in Kashmīr, was used as the basis of the first scholarly collection of Lallā's verses in the West, which was put together in 1920 by Sir

¹ The Kashmīrī word "vākh" is the same as the Sanskrit word "vākya." In Kashmīrī "vākh" is used both as singular as well as plural. The literal meaning of the term *Lalla-Vākh* is Lallā's Verse-Sayings.

George Grierson and Lionell D. Barnett. Dharmadāsa Darwēsh recited Lallā's verses as he had learned them from his elders as part of the family tradition. In addition to this collection, Grierson consulted two other manuscripts of the Stein collection at the Oxford Indian Institute, Stein A and Stein B, both written in Śāradā alphabet of Kashmīrī. Since it has not been possible to date the manuscripts that Grierson and Barnett used, it has yet to be determined how long the transmission of Lallā's poetry was exclusively oral.

Aside from Grierson and Barnett's 109-verse collection published as *Lallā Vākyaṇi*, Pandit Anand Koul collected seventy-five verses, which were published in the *Indian Antiquary* in the 1930s. Quite a few in Anand Koul's collection appear to be either variants or later additions. Some other noteworthy collections are S. N. Charagi's *The Wise Sayings of Laleshwari* (1938) and the special *Koshur Samāchār* (1971) edition on Lallā. The latter is a compilation from several different sources, but here, too, a great number of verses can easily be rejected since they do not conform to the style or thought content that has come to be associated with Lallā. Other more recent collections are primarily based on the above works.

Jayalal Kaul's study of Persian sources sheds further light on the confusion related to some verses, since they seem to have been mixed up with those of the Sūfī mystic Sheikh Nūr-ud-dīn (also known as Nund R̥ṣi), a junior contemporary of Lallā, who greatly revered her. Kaul notes that thirty-five verses in various Lallā collections are also part of *Nūrnāma-s* and *R̥ṣināma-s*, the biographies of Sheikh Nūr-ud-dīn. Many of these verses in later copies of the *R̥ṣināma-s* have been wrongly attributed to Sheikh Nūr-ud-dīn, even though this mixing-up of verses is not present in the earlier copies (Kaul 32-33). Since no concrete evidence is available to show whether the Lallā manuscripts or copies of manuscripts, the basis of the Grierson collection, were written before or after the earliest *Nūrnāma* recorded two hundred years after Sheikh Nūr-ud-dīn's death, it is difficult

to determine the true originator of the handful of verses that have been attributed both to Nūr-ud-dīn and Lallā. Ultimately, it is the style of the verses that determines their validity as hers.

The fact that Lallā's old Kashmīrī verses have come to us in a modern form intelligible to any average Kashmīrī is evidence in itself of continuing oral transmission over a fairly long period of time. It has been speculated that her verses over the centuries began to be sung by village minstrels. Later, they became part of Kashmīrī classical music (*sūfiānā kalām*) as they were sung as sacred invocations to open the assembly of Sūfīs (*Majlis-e-m'ārifīn*). Even though the language of the verses changed slowly along with the Kashmīrī language, the thought content, images, and metaphors seem to have remained the same, which gives the body of Lallā's compositions inner coherence. Her unique use of vivid concrete images and metaphors can be used as a helpful criterion for judging whether a particular verse can be attributed to her.

Life and Legends

Fourteenth century Kashmīr was a region in turmoil. The golden age of Kashmīr with its great and original contributions to literature, philosophy, drama, sculpture, painting, and architecture had passed, as the state collapsed from outside invasions and political upheavals from within. With the old order in disarray, the majority of people were concerned mainly with survival.

Queen Kotā, the last Hindu ruler of Kashmīr, actively participated in running the administration in the first few decades of the century in various capacities, including briefly as sovereign herself. Shah Mīr, a Muslim minister in the court, planned a rebellion in which she died. Kotā's death marks the end of old Kashmīr. Shah Mīr ascended the throne as Sultan Shams-ud-dīn in 1339 and started the Sultan dynasty, which ruled Kashmīr for over two centuries. The Hindu rule had been marked by religious tolerance, which continued under the early Muslim Sultans.

Lallā was born into a Brahmin family either in Pāndrenṭhan or Sempor in Kashmīr sometime in the early 1300s, and she died in the 1370s. A great deal of controversy exists as to when exactly she was born. Pandit Anand Koul gives the date of her birth, without citing his sources, as the middle of the fourteenth century (Koul 1921, 302). Jayalal Kaul's study of Persian sources shows, however, that Lallā in fact was born somewhere between 1317 and 1320, even as early as 1300-1301. This would explain the time frame in the first reference to Lallā in a Persian chronicle, *Wāqī'ātī Kashmīr* (1746) that describes her as having flourished or become famous during the reign of Sultan Alāu-ud-dīn (1343-54) and having died during the reign of Sultan Shihāb-ud-dīn (1354-73) (Kaul pp. 5-7).

She was given in marriage to Nica Bhaṭṭa of Pāmpor at a young age where she received a new name Padmāvātī. In her verses, Lallā always refers to herself by her maiden name "Lallā" and it is this name that one can with certainty say belonged to her. In folk memory she appears with two other names—Lalleśvarī and Lal Dēd. In Persian chronicles she is called Lallā 'Ārifa.

Legends about Lallā abound. We encounter several images: a gentle, introspective woman; a wandering ascetic who defies all conventions as she forges her own path; and a spiritual teacher who offers words of wisdom with love to her people (and to us today). Her married life was unhappy due to her mother-in-law's harsh treatment and her husband's angry disposition toward her. Lallā was not given enough to eat. Her mother-in-law would serve her a stone, covered with a thin layer of rice so as to make the serving seem large. She would quietly eat whatever she was served without any protest. In one legend, to prepare for a special *grahaśānti* ceremony at her home, she goes out to fetch water from the river. One of her neighbors teases her, saying she would have a great feast that night. Lallā's reply—whether a lamb or a sheep is killed at her house, the daughter-in-law will always get a stone—has become a famous saying in Kashmīr.

All legends agree that she was introspective and did not show a great deal of interest in worldly affairs. She is drawn early to spiritual quest. Siddha Śrīkaṇṭha initiates her into the Śaiva yoga. According to a legend, Lallā walks to the nearby river in Zinypor village before dawn every day to fetch a pitcher of water as was the custom in those days. But instead of directly filling the pitcher and returning home, she crosses the river to visit the shrine of Naṭa Keśava Bhairava. Suspecting her of infidelity, her husband quietly follows her one day on her morning ritual. He finds her sitting alone by the riverbank meditating. Enraged at what he sees, he goes home. As she returns with the water pitcher on her head, he confronts her angrily about her diversion and smashes the pitcher with a stick. Even though the pitcher breaks, the legend says, the water stays miraculously intact on her head. Lallā calmly goes inside the house, and pours the water into smaller vessels until all are full. She takes the leftover water and throws it outside where a pond is formed. Later on, the pond is named "Lalla- trāg" (the Pond of Lallā) which is said to have been full of water for many centuries. The incident marks the time of her renunciation when she leaves her home and family and becomes a wandering ascetic.

Lallā's verses reveal her to be a woman with feelings, thoughts and desires. She suffers trials and tribulations that a woman in medieval society might face because she is daring to seek her own path. Some of her verses reflect her awareness of the social construction of gender, perhaps not in the same way as a contemporary woman might, but nonetheless it is an amazing insight for a woman from the medieval period. In one verse she says she came to the world like a blooming cotton flower with all potential and possibilities intact, full of enthusiasm and aspiration. However, the ginner and the carder of society reduced her to a miserable state and turned her into utility-directed fine yarn, to be hung on the weaver's loom and turned into cloth. Her social self is thus a creation of others to be put in service for others.



I, Lallā, set out hoping to bloom
like a cotton flower.

The ginner and the carder gave me hard blows.
After the spinner spun me into fine yarn,
I was stretched on the loom
in the weaver's shop. (V 13)

When the washerman dashed me on a slab of stone,
rubbing me with much soap and washing soda.
and the tailor cut me into bits with scissors,
I, Lallā, attained supreme bliss. (V 14)

Lallā feels the need to transcend the conditioning which confines her to socially prescribed gender roles. She compares setting herself free from this conditioning to cleaning a piece of cloth by rubbing it with soap and dashing it on a slab of stone to loosen the extraneous matter sticking to it. She describes the shredding of the old identity in terms of the washed cloth being cut into little bits by the tailor's scissors. The "washerwoman" in the above verse is the self within her that aspires to higher states of awareness and hence, engages in acts that enable Lallā to transcend the socially defined "feminine" self, which she experiences as oppressive. As the tailor cuts the washed piece of cloth into bits, Lallā the daughter, Lallā the daughter-in-law, and Lallā the wife are torn into shreds and her true identity emerges into the open. The "tailor" is her higher Self, which guides her to forge a new identity that is not confined to socially prescribed modes of behavior.

Lallā's refusal to perform the female gender role is illustrated by the legends that describe her roaming in a nude state after she renounces her family. Such legends are based on the following verse:

My guru gave me only one advice—
from outside transfer the attention within.
That became Lallā's initiation—
that is why I began to wander naked. (V 50)

Lallā's wandering naked could refer to her divesting or disrobing herself of all worldly attachments, including her family, friends, and the comfort of a home. This interpretation is in line with the content of her other verses, which use a great many analogies and metaphors to convey esoteric ideas and experiences.

If we compare Lallā to another medieval Indian mystic poet/singer Mīrābāī (b. 1498), it is obvious that Lallā is more radical and challenges the patriarchal social norms at a deeper level. She rejects traditionally defined attributes of feminine self-effacement, often accompanied by devotional and supplicant approach toward spiritual experience. She takes control of her experience as a self-contained subjectivity, identifying more with Śiva than with Śakti.² This approach is associated with extreme austerities, self-containment, and self-absorption. No wonder her chosen deity is Śiva, the ascetic god of the Śaiva tradition.

Lallā is aware of her isolation not only in the secular world which she has renounced, but also in the spiritual world where, as an outsider to the written Kashmīrī Śaiva tradition, she has no way to share her experiences with those who understand her. She also does not have recourse to the experiences of women, oral or written, that preceded her. In contrast to Lallā, the seventeenth century Kashmīrī mystic poet Rūpa Bhavānī specifically mentions the sustenance she derives from Lallā's life and her verses. Even though Rūpa finds Lallā's life continuing into her own, she does not feel the need to become a wandering ascetic. In spite of leaving home for brief periods of time, Rūpa nonetheless remains integrally connected to her family and community.

As Lallā begins her quest, she describes worldly life in terms of a river, which she needs to cross in order to reach the other shore. Her body is a "boat" adrift in the material world that is

² Śiva represents the male principle and Śakti the female principle. Śakti is active and in this creative role, she is identified with nature, whereas Śiva is identified with pure spirit.

a temporary residence now. She has yet to prepare herself physically and mentally for the journey. In order to steer the "body-boat" to reach the other shore where her real home lies, she must train her mind in sustained and focused attention:

My path to this world was direct,
the road back is not.
The day passed by the riverside—
not a penny is in my pocket.
What would I pay to be ferried across? (V 1)

Lallā compares her weak will at this early stage of her quest to an "untwisted rope" which is not strong enough to pull the "boat" she is riding. It is like a "grass arrow fitted on a wooden bow." Her novice self is like "a shop without a lock in the midst of the marketplace" and as such an easy target for worldly desires that can rob her of her aspiration to move forward on her path:

A grass arrow fitted on a wooden bow I am.
My palace is in the hands of an ignorant carpenter.
In the midst of the market place I am
like a shop without a lock.
My body has become bereft of sanctity.
Who would understand my plight? (V 7)

In this unexplored territory, Lallā's journey is perilous. She is overwhelmed as she finds herself alone without any family or community support. She describes her body as a "cauldron" full of sensory impressions that tie her to the world. In yet another verse, she compares her body to a house and her sense organs to its doors and windows that must be kept shut in order for her to stay focused on her practice. Her scattered attention is like the "water oozing from unbaked clay saucers" and her restless mind is like a horse galloping away from one thought to another. The "mind-horse" needs to be brought under control in order to experience her higher Self.

The mind-horse wanders all over
with the flicker of an eyelid,

traveling a hundred thousand leagues.
 Whoever holds the reins
 with self-restraint and discrimination
 succeeds in controlling
 the inhaled and the exhaled breath. (V 59)

In a world bustling with activity all around her, Lallā strives to be detached. However, detachment is difficult to achieve. She uses the image of sugar candy to personify all enjoyable desires that pull her toward the world of sensory pleasures.

Loosened is the shoulder knot
 of my bundle of candy.
 Bent like a bow is my body.
 How can I carry this burden?
 My guru's words
 to achieve detachment are painful.
 A flock without a shepherd I am—
 how can I carry this burden? (V 6)

As she continues on her path, she exercises rigorous self-discipline. The following verse poignantly reflects her effort to tear herself away from the comforts and pleasures of life by reminding herself of their transitory nature:

I gently lament for you.
 Mind, you are in love with illusion.
 Not a shadow of this worldly splendor
 will accompany you.
 Oh, why do you forget your real nature? (V 5)

The path that she has chosen for herself is not easy to follow. She has yet to reach the level of detachment that would help her overcome the desire to live a worldly life.

Lallā's intuition is forged in the furnace of suffering. She endures ill treatment at home. But her walking out also gives her strength. Estrangement from society becomes her shield in the early stages of her quest. Her refusal to conform to social conventions is not taken kindly by community members who gossip about her and find her lifestyle scandalous.

As a wandering ascetic, insults and abuses come her way. She sometimes succeeds in keeping her spirits high, while at other times she is filled with self-pity. In order to make progress in her practice and reach her desired goal, Lallā feels the need to leave all negative emotions behind. Thus, she says:

The chain of embarrassment will break
when I can tolerate taunts
and mocking words.
The robe of self-pity will burn away
when the inner unbridled horse is under control. (V 8)

A story about her relates how street urchins used to hurl insults at her. A kind-hearted shopkeeper, a cloth merchant, witnessing this scene, scolds the youngsters and sends them away. Lallā calmly asks the shopkeeper to give her a long piece of cloth. When he complies, she tells him to cut it into two equal parts and weigh them separately. She then drapes one piece on her left shoulder and the second on her right shoulder and goes away. As soon as someone calls her a bad name, she ties a knot in the piece on her right shoulder and as she is shown respect by somebody else, she ties a knot in the other piece on her left shoulder. In the evening she brings back the two pieces of cloth to the shopkeeper and asks him to weigh them once again—both pieces weigh exactly as they had before. The number of knots signifying good or bad words has had no effect on the weight of each half of the piece of cloth. She thus conveys to the shopkeeper her equanimity in the face of respect or ridicule shown by others towards her:

Even if thousands of abuses
are hurled at me,
I am not hurt in my heart.
If I am a devotee
of all-pervading Self—Śaṅkara,
ashes will not soil the mirror. (V 11)

Lallā's verses usually lack the devotional fervor of Bhakti poets like Mīrābai. Hence, it is easy to overlook the significance of "love" in her oeuvre. A few of her verses, however, do refer to the world of emotions. Intense yearning and love, she realizes, is the first step to get closer to the object of her quest. As a devotee of Śiva, she "suffers the fire of love" as she awakens Śiva within her. She conveys the experience of "awakening her darling" by using vivid images of "grinding" the heart in the "mortar of love," and "burning" and "roasting" it and "tasting" it herself.

I ground my heart in the mortar of love.
 Evil thoughts left me
 and I became calm.
 I burned and roasted it
 and tasted it myself.
 How do I know
 if this practice will let me live or die? (V 18)

The love experienced with so much intensity is not the egoistical or narcissistic love, but rather love for the boundless reality within her. This is a love in which fulfillment is not a let-down, a love that remains forever fresh. The inner-directed love for Śiva thus constitutes the first step in the unfolding of her spiritual journey.

Awakening in the early dawn,
 I summoned the restless mind.
 Enduring the pain,
 I devoted myself to god.
 Saying "I am Lallā, I am Lallā,"
 I awakened my darling.
 On becoming one with him,
 I purified my mind and body. (V 19)

In the fire of this love, Lallā forges her mind and body. She has momentary glimpses of the bliss of communion with Śiva which prepare her for more advanced stages of her practice.

Lallā's life can be compared to that of the medieval Śaiva mystic poet Akkā Mahādevī who lived in South India in the 12th century. Mahādevī belonged to the Vīraśaiva religious reform movement of mystics who rejected caste and class hierarchy and protested against ritualistic and orthodox Śaiva religion focused around complex daily rituals. She is known to have defied social rules and customs, thrown away modesty and wandered in a nude state, her body covered with her long hair. Mahādevī's poetry (*vācanas*), spoken in Kannada, shows a curious blend of bhakti tradition and Śaiva monotheism. In these, she expresses her love and devotion to Cenna Mallikārjuna, a form of Śiva. Describing him as her husband, lover, and father, her only aspiration is to be united with him.

Mahādevī uses the genre of love poetry to articulate her spiritual experience. When she visits the school of Vīraśaiva mystics, founded by Basavanna in Kalyana, she engages in a verbal exchange with the head of the assembly, Allama Prabhu, who tests her to see if she is worthy to join the fellowship. The first question he asks her is to identify her husband if she wants to stay. Mahādevī replies that she is married to Cenna Mallikārjuna. The verbal exchange that ensues soon after shows the assembly her advanced spiritual state and she is welcomed with open arms. In some of her poems, she describes her initiation into the fellowship in terms of a marriage ritual when she becomes Cenna Mallikārjuna's wife:

Setting a canopy of fire
 Over an altar made of water,
 Spreading a hailstone carpet,
 He came and wedded
 A headless bridegroom to a legless bride.
 They gave me to a life never to be shaken off!
 They married me to a groom³
 Named Cenna Mallikārjuna

³ Akka Mahādevī, quoted in Swamy's *The Vīraśaiva Saints*, p. 104.

Mahādevī's poetry is similar to Mīrā in its bhakti orientation, even as it is closer to Lallā's in its philosophic and esoteric content. Unlike Lallā, however, Mahādevī makes an aesthetic dimension central to her spiritual quest. In all her poems the signature line refers to Cenna Mallikārjuna, (translated both as "lovely Arjuna, Lord of goddess Mallika" or "lovely lord, white as jasmine"). The latter suggests both the aroma as well as the beauty of jasmine flowers. The qualifier "white" represents her quest to be united with a state that is devoid of all distinctions. While Mahādevī makes human love a metaphor for mystic experience, Lallā makes the image of ascetic Śiva her ideal. One could perhaps say that what Mahādevī acquired through intense *bhaktiyoga* (path of devotion), Lallā achieved through concentrated *jñānayoga* (path of knowledge). The poetry of both women reveals their knowledge of the esoteric aspects of Śaivism. The paths they adopted were different, even as it seems their final objective was the same.

Exploring the Inner Landscape

A mystic's journey involves the exploration of the inner landscape of mind. Initially the world appears fragmented and divided, populated with a variety of colors, shapes and forms. The mystic's intuition reveals that permeating all the variety and diversity is the colorless, shapeless and formless light of consciousness.

Many of Lallā's verses specifically refer to Śaiva practices centered on breathing to reach inner focus, which is necessary to have higher states of awareness.

Slowly through practicing breath control,
the lamp shone
and I saw my true nature.
The inner light I realized—
caught it in darkness and seized it. (V 46)

Her 'true nature' is the realization of the unity of the Self

and the self or, in other words, the non-dual nature of reality. It is essential to let go of ego-consciousness in order to have such an experience. Since self-consciousness always keeps dividing and separating what is otherwise continuous and interpenetrating the conflict from duality persists. In order to clarify the relationship of the Self to the self, Lallā uses the metaphor of water and two other of its forms as they appear in nature: ice and snow. When the clouds disperse and the sun reveals its face, both ice and snow melt and turn into water, even though as ice and snow they have their own unique properties as well as modes of existence specific to their condition:

Cold changes water into ice or snow.

Discernment shows the three different states
are not really different.

When the sun of consciousness shines,
the plurality is dissolved into oneness.

The universe appears throughout permeated with Śiva.
(V 63)

The shining of the sun of consciousness here refers to the realization of one's unity with the Self when the subject/object duality is erased and the Self, the quintessential nature of both, is revealed in its fullness.

To elaborate further on this relationship, she compares the Self to the axle of a grindstone. The axle must be set into motion for the wheat to move into the middle portion to be ground between the flat stones of the grindstone. Without this action, the movement of the grindstone and consequently, that of the wheat would come to a standstill. The moving axle is the driving force that brings about the motion of the flat stones, which pulls the wheat in to be ground into fine flour:

The grindstone moves
when set in motion.

The axle knows the mystery
of the grindstone.

When the grindstone moves,

fine flour comes out
as the wheat moves by itself
into the grindstone
to be crushed. (V 103)

The grindstone thus becomes a metaphor for human existence. To live an enlightened life, the self-aware individual takes control of the axle of life, the higher Self, in order to experience fully the dynamic weaving of the world from the light of consciousness.

Most of Lallā's verses thus comment on the continuity between the self and the Self and between the Self and the world. Individuals are not islands in the ocean of consciousness, but rather waves in the ocean, as their existence is intricately bound up with the reality out of which they emerge. She captures this continuity in the image of the Self as a net spread over the entire phenomenal world, in the meshes of which the individual existence takes shape.

Śiva is like a fine net spread everywhere,
subtly permeating the physical world.
If you don't see him while alive,
how can you do so when dead?
Through self-introspection,
remove the self from within yourself. (V 145)

Lallā relies on metaphors and similes from day to day life to convey her experiences, as she tailors her message to the audience she is addressing. She sometimes speaks of her experience in terms of devotion to Śiva, while at other times she describes Śiva as the transcendental reality. Elsewhere, she speaks of the need to do away entirely with duality of all kinds in order to find a new space for the actualizing self outside any dualistic framework. The most profound of Lallā's verses, then, convey the experience that is beyond any anthropomorphic representation. She compares the advanced stages of her spiritual journey to traveling through a field of void and her ultimate goal is to realize the state of *śūnya* or nothingness.

Teachings

Even though leading the life of an ascetic, Lallā is very much concerned with the welfare of the people in her community. Śaiva teachings were traditionally imparted only to a select few during her time. Lallā is the first woman we know of who openly speaks of these practices to common people in vernacular Kashmīrī language.

Lallā criticizes the elite who take great pride in their scholarly achievements. The scholar's knowledge of the tradition, she says, is no guarantee of genuine insight or wisdom. This view reflects her own position in relation to the Śaiva tradition in that she leaves the written tradition behind, and focuses on direct experience of that which is the subject of elaboration and discussion in the written tradition. In one of her verses she says that she learned some things from books, but others she learned through direct experience. Thus, she emphasizes direct experience above any elaborate study of religious texts. The strongest current that runs through Lallā's verses reflects her belief that enlightened perspective can be realized through one's own striving.

Lallā was quite secular in her outlook, which is perhaps the reason why both Hindus and Muslims have held her in such high esteem. She preached tolerance towards religious practices other than one's own and she refrained from identifying herself with any sect or religion. Legends speak of the Sūfī and Hindu mystics gathering together frequently to exchange ideas and experiences. The Sūfī mystics lived simple and devout lives and never abdicated their missionary spirit. Lallā's emphasis on religious tolerance may have been influenced by this free association with Sūfī mystics of her time. Her belief in religious tolerance, however, is also in agreement with the monist Śaiva philosophy that is secular in its orientation.

In her verses Lallā critiques prescriptive religious practices of all kinds and advises people not to differentiate between Hindus and Muslims, as Śiva, which is their own Self, is

omniscient and hence, beyond sectarian divisions. People might call this state Śiva, Keśava, Mahāvira, or Buddha, but these are just different names assigned to the same reality:

The Self may be named Śiva,
Keśava, or Mahāvīra
or the lotus born Buddha.
Whatever name it may have,
may it set free a weakling like me
from worldly afflictions. (V 12)

As a critic of prescriptive religious practices, Lallā points to the limited use of external worship or rituals of various kinds. Objects of ritual worship, for example, kuś grass, sesame seeds, lamp or water, are unnecessary in the same way as is making offerings of animals to idols. Thus, reciting prayers, chanting mantras, or turning rosary beads are not enough to move forward and make progress in spiritual awareness. Parrots can be taught to recite the name of Rāma, so repetition of a mantra in itself does not lead to self - knowledge:

Those without discernment, dear,
read religious books
as parrots recite "Rāma" in a cage.
Reading the Gītā becomes an excuse—
I have read the Gītā
and I am still reading it. (V 117)

She urges people not to confuse the aids to focus attention, for example, rituals or chanting of mantras, with the ultimate goal of the spiritual journey, which is self realization. Religious scriptures, according to her, are beneficial for beginners, but those who make a religion of recitation of scriptures are chasing illusion. The genuine progress in the spiritual journey of the novice happens only when the mind and the heart work together. Through various breathing exercises as well as meditations, the novice undergoes a transformation of mind and body and achieves higher levels of awareness.

Lallā regards people who are consumed by their quest for deeper answers as fully awake and those immersed only in material reality as asleep. The real temple is within each individual. Thus, she says, self-knowledge cannot be acquired by merely going to temples or going on pilgrimages:

Some renounce their home,
and some their hermitage.
All is futile
if the mind is not under control.
Meditate on your breath
day and night,
and stay wherever you are. (V 98)

To those desiring to live enlightened lives, Lallā advises moderation in drinking, eating, and clothing. She does not approve of starving the body through fasting or religious austerities. The real religious practice is to engage in actions performed in the spirit of detachment.

Don't torture your body
with thirst and starvation.
When the body is exhausted,
take care of it.
Cursed be your fasts
and religious ceremonies.
Be good to others—
that is the real religious practice. (V 118)

According to a legend, once her teacher Śrīkaṇṭha was bathing in the river, while Lallā was cleaning the outside of a pot full of dirt a little upstream. Śrīkaṇṭha, puzzled, asks her how she could possibly have a clean pot if she scrubbed it only from the outside. Lallā responds that how could he cleanse his body through bathing alone, without purifying his thoughts and feelings. This legend could be understood as Lallā's critique of hypocritical practices of people who engaged in ritual purification, while in the secular world they performed acts oppressive to others. Habitually

performing religious practices, she says, might give people satisfaction in engaging in something spiritual but in reality would do nothing to expand the limited vision that leads to religious bigotry and non-tolerance. She compares the path of wisdom to a kitchen garden that needs to be nurtured with self-restraint where good actions are performed with detachment.

Lallā is one of the few medieval women mystic poets worldwide who have left behind a legacy of great relevance to contemporary society. She urges people to have courage to seek their inner vision, instead of leading a life governed merely by social expectations. She brings our attention to the need for a morality based on honesty and personal responsibility, and provokes us to look beyond the veil of prohibitions and constraints imposed by social and religious institutions. The oral transmission of her verses over centuries testifies to her perennial appeal to people of all faiths.

Lallā lived during a time of great change and her words were meant to be a vehicle for change. Her verses can be seen as an instrument of change—an inner change—that must go hand in hand with any external political change of society. She urges us to create a society based on equality, mutual respect, and caring. Since the contemporary era also constitutes an age of transition, though now on a global scale, the themes that permeate her verses are as valid today as they were in medieval Kashmīr. For that reason, Lallā's verses are as relevant today as they were more than six centuries ago. No sanctified place or relic exists from Lallā's time marking the place of her death. A legend says when she died a bright flame shot forth from her body and vanished from sight. The flame might have vanished, but it continues to inform the spirit of Lallā's verses which enlighten and amaze us even today.

Key to Pronunciation

Key to Pronunciation of Kaśmīrī Verses Written in Modified Devanāgarī Script

A. Vowels

1. अ or (')	as in	अंड	=	half
		अंछ	=	eye
2. आ or (i)	as in	द्वार	=	window
		लार	=	cucumber
3. उ or ()	as in	तुर	=	tatter
		खुर	=	slip
4. ऊ or (.)	as in	तर	=	cold
		द्रफ	=	incense
5. ओ or (ॐ)	as in	ओन	=	blind
		सोन	=	deep

B. Consonants

1. च	c	as in	चोन	=	your
2. च	ts	as in	चास	=	cough
			चल	=	go away
3. छ	tsh	as in	छाय	=	shadow
			गछ	=	go
4. ज	z	as in	जल	=	water
			जाल	=	net

Sounds in Kaśmīrī and the Diacritical Marks used in the Romanized Script

t = त	th = थ	ṭ = ट	tḥ = ठ
d = द	ḍ = ड		

ō = short sound of o as in Kashmīrī क्वाछि kōcha = lap; mōkh = face
 ẽ = short sound of e as in Kashmīrī स्यख sēkh = sand; च्चथ tsēth = mind

Lallā's Verses

The River of Life



1

आयस वते गयस न वते
 सुमन स्वथि मंज लूस्तुम दोह
 चंदस वुछुम त हार न अते
 नाव तारस दिम क्याह बोह

āyas vate gayas na vate
suman svathimañz lūstum doh
caṇdas vuchum ta hār na ate
nāva tāras dima kyāh bōh

My path to this world was direct,
 the road back is not.
 The day passed by the riverside—
 not a penny is in my pocket.
 What would I pay to be ferried across?

2

आमि पन् स॒द॒र॒स ना॒वि छ॒स ल॒मान
 क॒ति बो॒जि द॒य म्यो॒न म्य॑ति दि॒यि तार
 आ॒म्यन टा॒क्यन पो॒ज ज॒न श॒मान
 जु॒व छु॒म ब्र॒मान ग॒र ग॒छ॒ह

*āmi pana sadaras nāvi chas lamān
 kati bozi day myon mēti diyī tār
 āmēn tākēn poñ zan shamān
 zuv chum bramān gara gatshaha*

I pull the boat with an untwisted rope.
 Will god hear me
 and help me across?
 Water oozes from unbaked clay saucers.
 My heart desires to go home.

3

हा ज्यत्ता कव छुय लो॒गमु॒त पर॒मस
 कव गो॒य अप॒जिस प॒ज्युक ब्रोंत
 दो॒शिबो॒ज वश को॒रनख पर॒दरमस
 यिन् गछ॑न् ज्यन् म॒रनस क्रोंत

hā tsēṭṭa kava chuy lōgmūt paramas
kava gōy apazis pazyuk bront
dōśibōz vash kōrnakh pardarmas
yina gatshana zēna maranas kront

Hey mind, why are you attached
 to the external world?
 Why do you mistake
 illusory for the real?
 Lack of wisdom has won you over
 to the wrong path—
 resigned to coming and going,
 death and rebirth.

4

आयस कमि दिशि त॒ कमि वते
 गछ॑ कमि दिशि क॒व॒ जान॒ वथ
 अ॒न्ति दाय॑ लगिमय॒ तते
 छा॒निस॑ फो॒कस॑ का॒ह ति नो॑ सथ

āyas kami dishi ta kami vate
gatsha kami dishi kava zāna vath
anti dāy lagimay tate
chānis phōkas kāñh ti no sath

From which direction did I come
 and what road did I take?
 Which direction shall I go?
 How will I know the path?
 Right guidance will finally come to my aid—
 empty breath has no value.

5

ललिथ ललिथ वदय बोह वाय
 च्यत्ता मुहुच प्ययिय माय
 रोजिय नो पत लोह लङ्गरच छा़य
 निज़् स्वरूप क्याह मोतुय हाय

*lalith lalith vaday bōh vāy
 tsēṭta muhuc pēyiy māy
 roziy no pata loha laṅgarac ṭshāy
 niz svarūp kyāh mōṭhuy hāy*

I gently lament for you.
 Mind, you are in love with illusion.
 Not a shadow of this worldly splendor
 will accompany you.
 Oh, why do you forget your real nature?



6

नाबद्य बारस अटगंड ड्योल गोम
 दिह कान होल गोम ह्यक् क्यहो
 ग्वर सुन्द वनुन रावन त्योल प्योम
 पहलि रोस्त ख्योल गोम ह्यक् क्यहो

nābadi bāras aṭagaṇḍ dyōl gom
diha-kān hōl gom hyaka kyaho
gvara sund vanun rāvan tyōl pyom
pahali-rōst khyōl gom hyaka kyaho

Loosened is the shoulder knot
 of my bundle of candy.
 Bent like a bow is my body.
 How can I carry this burden?
 My guru's words
 to achieve detachment are painful.
 A flock without a shepherd I am—
 how can I carry this burden?

7

हचिवि ह॑रिंजि प्य॑चिव कान गोम
 अबख छान प्योम यथ राज॑दाने
 मंज॑बाग बा॒ज़रस कुल्फ॑ रोस्त वान गोम
 ति॒र्थ-रोस्त पान गोम कुस मालि ज्ञाने

hacivi hārinji pētsiv-kān gom
abakh chān pyom yath rāzdāne
manzbāg bāzaras kulfa-rōst vān gom
tirtha-rōst pān gom kus māli zāne

A grass arrow fitted on a wooden bow I am.
 My palace is in the hands
 of an ignorant carpenter.¹
 In the midst of the market place I am
 like a shop without a lock.
 My body has become bereft of sanctity.
 Who would understand my plight?

¹ The "grass arrow," "ignorant carpenter," and "shop without a lock" are metaphors for the novice self.

8

मंदुछि हाँकता कर छैनयम
 यलि ह्यँडुन गेलुन असुन प्राव
 आरुक जाम् करसना दज्यम
 यलि अन्द्रयुम खारयुक रोज्यम वार

mandachi hāṅkal kar tshenēm
yali hēdun gelun asun prāva
āruk jāma karsanā dazēm
yali andryum khāryuk rozēm vāra

The chain of embarrassment will break
 when I can tolerate taunts
 and mocking words.
 The robe of self-pity will burn away
 when the inner unbridled horse² is under control.

² The "unbridled horse" represents the scattered nature of restless mind skipping from thought to thought aimlessly.

9

रुत त॒ क्रुत॑ सोरुय प॒ज्यम
 कनन॑ न॒ बो॒जुन॑ अ॒छयन॑ न॒ बाव
 ओरु॑क दपुन॑ यलि वो॒न्दि वु॒ज्यम
 र॒त्नदी॑प प्र॒ज्जल्य॑म वर॒ज्जनि॑ वाव॒

*rut ta krut soruy pazēm
 kanan na bozun achēn na bāva
 oruk dapun yēli vōndi vuzēm
 ratandīp prazalēm varzani vāva*

Both good and bad, I must endure.
 My ears don't hear,
 and my eyes don't see.
 When the inner Self
 awakens in my heart,
 the lamp will shine
 even in the midst of a tornado.

10

गाटुलाह अख वुछुम ब्वछि सांत्य मरान
 पन ज़न हरान पोहनि वावलाह
 न्यषबोद अख वुछुम वाजस मारान
 तन लल बोह प्रारान छयन्यम न प्राह

*gātulāh akh vuchum bōchi sāty marān
 pan zan harān pōhani vāvalāh
 nēshabōd akh vuchum vāzas mārān
 tana lalla bōh prārān tshēnēm na prāh*

A wise one I saw dying of hunger
 just as leaves fall
 with the early winter wind.
 And I saw a fool beating his cook.
 Since then I, Lallā, am waiting
 for the moment
 when my worldly ties are severed.

11

आसा बोल पडिन्यम सासा
 म्यं मनिवासा खीद न ह्यये
 बोह योद सहज शंकर बखच आसा
 मकरिस सासा मल क्याह प्यये

*āsā bol paḍinēm sāsā
 mē manivāsā khīd na hēye
 bōh yōd sahaza śaṅkara-bakts āsā
 makaris sāsā mal kyāh pēye*

Even if thousands of abuses
 are hurled at me,
 I am not hurt in my heart.
 If I am a devotee
 of all-pervading Self— Śaṅkara³,
 ashes will not soil the mirror.

³ Śaṅkara is a name for Śiva.

12

शिव वा कीशव वा जिन वा
 कमलज नाथ नाम दारिन युह
 म्यं अबलि कासितन बवरोज
 सुह वा सुह वा सुह वा सुह

śiva vā kīśava vā jin vā
kamalaza nāth nāma dārin yuh
mē abali kāsitan bavarōz
suh vā suh vā suh vā suh

The Self may be named Śiva,
 Keśava, or Mahāvīra
 or the lotus-born Buddha.
 Whatever name it may have,
 may it set free a weakling like me
 from worldly afflictions.

Crossing the River



13

ललु बोह द्रायस कपसि पोशिचि सांचई
 काडि तू दूनि करनम यचय लथ
 तुयि यलि खारिनम् जाविजि तये
 बोवरि वान गयम अलांजय लथ

*lalla bōh drāyas kapasi pośici sātsiy
 kādi ta dūni karnam yatsay lath
 tuyi yali khārinam zāviji taye
 bovari vāna gayam alānzay lath*

I, Lallā, set out hoping to bloom
 like a cotton flower.
 The ginner and the carder gave me hard blows.
 After the spinner spun me into fine yarn,
 I was stretched on the loom
 in the weaver's shop.

14

दोब्ब्य यलि छावनस दोब्ब्य कनि प्यठय
 सज्ज त साबन मछनम यच्चय
 साँचि यलि फिरनम हनि हनि काँचइ
 अद् ललि म्यं प्रावम परम ग्थ

dōbi yali chāvanas dōbi-kani pēṭhay
saza ta sāban matshnam yatsay
sātsi yali phiranam hani hani kātsiy
ada lalli mē prāvam parma gath

When the washerman dashed me
 on a slab of stone,
 rubbing me with much soap and washing soda
 and the tailor cut me into bits with scissors,
 I, Lallā, attained supreme bliss.

15

नाथा न् पान न् पर ज़ोनुम
 सदै बूदुम यिकुय दिह
 त्र बोह बोह त्र म्यूल न ज़ोनुम
 त्र कुस बोह क्वस् छु सन्दीह

nāthā na pān na par zonum
sadai būdum yekuy dih
tsa bōh bōh tsa myūl na zonum
tsa kus bōh kōsa chuh sandīh

Lord, the Self in myself and others
 I did not recognize.
 I have always known only this body.
 You and I are joined in one,
 I did not know.
 My doubts remained:
 who are you and who am I?

16

क्याह कर् पीचन दहन तु काहन
 वोक्षुन यथ ल्यंजि करिथ यिम गय
 सारिय समहन यंथ्य रज्जि लमहन
 अद् क्याज्जि राविहे काहन गाव

kyāh kara päntsān dahan ta kāhan
vōkhshun yath lēji karith yim gay
sāriy samahan yēthi razi lamahan
ada kyāzi rāvihe kāhan gāv

What will I do
 with the five, the ten, and the eleven?
 They have all emptied out the cauldron.
 If all had come together
 and pulled the rope,
 the eleven would not have lost the cow.⁴

⁴ The "cauldron" is the physical body, the "five" are five *bhūtas* or principles of experience, the "ten" are the five sense organs plus the five organs of action, and the "eleven" are these ten organs and the mind. The "cow" symbolizes the Śiva consciousness.

17

यिमय श्यं त्र्यं तिमय श्यं म्यं
 श्यामगला त्र्यं व्योन ताठिस
 युहोय व्यनबीद त्र्यं त म्यं
 त्रं श्यन स्वामी बोह श्ययि मशिस

yimay śē tsē timay śē mē
śyāmagalā tsē byōn tāthis
yuhōy bēnabīd tsē ta mē
tsa śēn svāmī bōh śēyi maśis

You have the same six attributes⁵ as I do.
 Blue-throated One,⁶
 without you I am afflicted.
 The difference between you and me—
 you are master of the six,
 whereas I am deluded by the six.

⁵ The six attributes are anger, bewilderment, arrogance, passion, jealousy, and avarice.

⁶ Śiva is also called the "Blue-throated One" in the mythological literature.

18

लोलकि वोखल वलिंज पिशिम
 क्वकल त्रजिम त् रुजस रस्
 बुजुम त् जजिम पानस चशिम
 कव ज्ञान तव सात्य मर किन् लस्

lolaki vōkhala vālinj piśim
kvakal tsajim ta rūzas rasa
buzam ta jājim pānas caśim
kava zāna tava sātya mara kina lasa

I ground my heart in the mortar of love.
 Evil thoughts left me
 and I became calm.
 I burned and roasted it
 and tasted it myself.
 How do I know
 if this practice will let me live or die?



19

पोत जूनि वंथिथ मोत बोलनोवुम
 दग ललनावुम दयि संजि प्रहे
 ललि ललि करान लाल वुज्जनोवुम
 मील्लिथ तस मन श्रोच्योम दहे

*pōt zūni vathith mōt bolanovum
 dag lalanāvam dayi sanzi prahe
 lalli lalli karān lāla vuzanovum
 mīlith tas man shrotsyom dahe*

Awakening in the early dawn,
 I summoned the restless mind.
 Enduring the pain,
 I devoted myself to god.
 Saying "I am Lallā, I am Lallā,"
 I awakened my darling.
 On becoming one with him,
 I purified my mind and body.

20

ल्यक् त् थक् प्यठ शेरि ह्यचम्
 न्यन्दा सपनिम पथ ब्रोंठ तान्य
 लल छयस कल जांह नो छयनिम
 अद यलि सपनिस व्यपिहे क्याह

*lěka ta thōka pēth sheri hētsam
 nyandā sapanim path bronṭh tāni
 lalla chēs kal zānh no tshēnim
 ada yali sapanis vēpihe kyāh*

I endured verbal abuse and slander.
 Scandals broke out
 about my past and present.
 I am Lallā
 and my yearning never stopped.
 When I achieved my goal,
 nothing affected me.

21

जनम प्राविथ व्यव न छोंडुम
 लूबन बूगन बरम न प्रय
 सोमुय आहार स्यठाह जोनुम
 चोलुम द्वःखु वाव पोलुम दय

zanam prāvith vēbav na tshoṇḍum
lūban būgan baram na pray
sōmuy āhār sēthāh zonum
tsolum dōkh-vāv polum day

In life I did not desire affluence.
 Nor did I love greed or enjoyment of luxuries.
 Moderate meals I considered sufficient for me.
 I endured suffering and poverty
 and remained devoted to god.

22

ग्वरस पृछोम सासि लटे
 यस नु केंह वनान तस क्याह नाव
 पृछान पृछान थचिस तु लूसस
 केंहनस निशि क्याहताम द्राव

gvaras pritshom sāsi late
yas na kēñh vanān tas kyāh nāv
pritshān pritshān thacis ta lūsas
kēñhnasa nishi kyāhtām drāv

Again and again I asked my guru—
 What is the name of the undefinable?
 Repeated questioning
 tired and exhausted me—
 something has come out of this nothing.

23

लल॒ बो॒ह लू॒सस॑ छाँडान॒ त॒ गारान॑
 हल॒ म्य॑ को॒रमस॑ रसनि॒शति॑य
 वुछुन॑ ह्यो॒तमस॑ ता॒र्य डी॒ठिमस॑ बरन
 म्यति॑ कल॒ गने॑यम॒ त॒ जोग॑मस॒ त॒तिय॑

lalla bōh lūsas tshāṇḍān ta gārān
hal mē kōrmās rasaniśatiy
vuchun hyōtmas tārya dīṭhimas baran
mēti kal gañeyam ta zogmas tatiy

I, Lallā, became tired
 searching so eagerly.
 I put more effort into it
 than I was capable of.
 When I started seeing,
 I saw the doors bolted—
 my yearning increased
 and I kept a watch there.

24

अद्रिय आयस चंदरय गारान
 गारान आयस हिह्नन हिह
 चाय है नारान चाय है नारान
 चाय है नारान यिम कम विह

andriy āyas tsandaray gārān
gārān āyas hihñen hih
tsāy hai nārān tsāy hai nārān
tsāy hai nārān yim kam vih

From within I came searching for the moon.
 I continued seeking similar symbols.
 You are god⁷,
 you are god,
 and you are god—
 why these distinctions?

⁷ The word “nārān” specifically means God Viṣṇu but also refers to any god.

The Field of Void



25

ये ग्वरा परमीश्वरा
 बावतम च्यं छुय अन्तर व्योद
 द्वशिवय वोपदान कंद-पुरा
 हुह कव त्रुन त हाह कव तोत

*ye gvarā paramīśvarā
 bāvtam tsëy chuy antar vyōd
 dvaśīvay vōpadān kanda-purā
 huh kava türun ta hāh kava tōt*

You, guru, Parameśvara,
 reveal to me the inner truth you know.
 Both prāṇas arise
 from the abode of the navel cakra.
 Why is *huh* cold
 and *hāh* hot?⁸

⁸ In this and the next verse, Lallā refers to the meditation on the inhaled and the exhaled breath, a basic practice of Kāshmīrī Śaivism. The *brahmarandhra* is the seventh cakra.

26

नाबिस्थानस छय प्रक्रथ जलवनी
 हिदिस्ताम यति प्राण वतगोत
 ब्रह्माण्डस प्यठ सात नद वहवनी
 हुह तव तुरुण त हाह तव तोत

nābisthānas chay prakrath zalavanī
hidistām yēti prān vatagōt
brahmāṇḍas pyetha sāt nad vahavani
huh tava türun ta hāh tava tōt

The region of the navel is naturally ablaze.
 The breath moves up the throat
 to the *brahmarandhra*
 from which the river flows.
 For this reason, *Huh* is cold
 and *Hāh* is hot.

27

दिहचि लरि दारि-बर त्रोपरिम
 प्राण-चूर रोटुम त द्युतमस दम
 हृदयिचि कूठरि अन्दर गोडुम
 ओंमकि चोबुक तुलिमस बम

dihaci lari dāri bar trōparim
prāṇa tsūr rōṭum ta dyutmas dam
hrēdyici kūṭhari andar gōṇḍum
omaki cobuka tulimas bam

Doors and windows of my body I closed.
 The prāṇa-thief I caught
 and brought under control.
 I tied it inside the chamber of my heart.
 I whipped it with the syllable Om.

28

ओंकार यलि लयि ओनुम
 वुहि कोरुम फ़नुन पान
 शय वोत त्राविथ त सथ मार्ग रोदुम
 त्यलि लल बोह वाचस प्रकाशस्थान

omkār yēli layi ōnum
vuhi kōrum panun pān
śē vōta trāvith ta sath mārg rōṭum
tēli lalla bōh vātsas prakāśasthān

I became absorbed in the sacred syllable Om.
 I burned myself like coal.
 Leaving behind six paths,
 I seized the seventh—
 and then, I, Lallā, reached the abode of light.

29

च्यत् तुर्ग वगिह्यथ रोदुम
 च्यलिथ मिलविथ दशिनाडि वाव
 तवय शशिकल व्यंगलिथ वृछम
 शून्यस शून्याह मील्लिथ गव

tsĕta turg vagihĕth rōṭum
tsĕlith milavith dashināḍi vāv
tavay śaśikal vēgalith vatshām
śūnyas śūnyāh mīlith gav

I took the reins of the mind-horse.
 Through practice, I learned breath control.
 Then only the orb of the moon melted⁹
 and dripped down into my body—
 nothingness merged with nothingness.

⁹ The "orb of the moon" refers to the seventh cakṛa.



30

अन्दर आसिथ न्यबर छेन्डुम
 पवनन रगन करनम सथ
 दयान् किनि दय जगि कीवल ज़ोनुम
 रंग गव संगस मीलिथ क्यथ

aṇdar äsith nēbar tshonḍum
pavanan ragan karnam sath
dyāna kini day zagi kīval zonum
raṅg gav sangas mīlith kēth

Though within, I searched outside.
 The control of breath
 soothed my inner channels.
 Through meditation, I realized that
 god and the world are one—
 the manifest world merged with the unmanifest.

31

बान गोल तय प्रकाश आव जूने
 चंदर गोल तय मोतुय च्यथ
 च्यथ गोल तय केहति ना कुने
 गै भूर भुवाह स्वर व्यसर्जिथ क्यथ

bān gōl tay prakāśa āv zūne
tsandar gōl tay mōtuy tsēth
tsēth gōl tay keñhti nā kune
gay bhūr bhuvāh svar vēsarzith kēth

The sun sets,
 the moon shines.
 The moon vanishes,
 consciousness remains.
 Consciousness disappears,
 nothingness remains—
 the physical, spiritual, and metaphysical
 merge into nothingness.

32

पानस लांगिथ रूदुख म्यं च
 म्यं च्यं छान्दान लूस्तुम दोह
 पानस मंज यलि ड्यूतुख म्यं च
 म्यं च्यं त् पानस द्युतुम छोह

pānas lāgith rūdukh mē tsa
mē tsē tshāṇḍān lūstum doh
pānas manz yēli dyūṭhukh mē tsa
mē tsē ta pānas dyutum tshoh

When I was attached to the self,
 you remained hidden from me.
 Time passed as I searched for you.
 When I saw you within—
 you and I were united
 in ecstasy.

33

दिशि आयस दश दिशि तीलिथ
 त्र्यलिथ त्रोटुम शून्य अद् वाव
 शिवय ड्यूतुम शायि शायि मीलिथ
 श्यं त् त्रह त्रापिमस त् शिवय द्राव

dishi āyas dasha dishi tīlith
tsēlith tsōṭum śūnya ada vāv
śivay ḍyūṭhum śāyi śāyi mīlith
śē ta trēh trāpimas ta śivay drāv

After wandering in ten directions,
 I found the true path.
 Through breath control,
 I penetrated the void—
 Śiva I saw permeating all.
 Shutting the six and the three,¹⁰
 I found Śiva the root cause of all.

¹⁰ The "six" refers to the five sense organs and the mind, while the "three" are the three body openings.

34

तन् मन् गयस बोह तस कुनय
 बूज्जम सतच गन्टा वज्जान
 तथ जायि दारनायि दारन रटम
 अकाश त् प्रकाश कोरुम सर

tana mana gayas bōh tas kunay
buzam sataca gañṭā vazān
tath jāyi dārnāyi dāran raṭam
akāśa ta prakāśa kōrum sara

Physically and mentally
 absorbed in That,
 I heard the bell of truth ring.
 In that state, I meditated—
 I realized the manifest
 and the unmanifest.

A Lotus Blooms



35

शून्युक मांदान कोडुम पानस
 म्यं ललि रूज्म न् ब्वद न् होश
 बेदीय सपनिस पानय पानस
 अद् कमि गिलि फोल ललि पम्पोश

śūnyuk mādān koḍum pānas
mē lalli rūzam na bōd na hosh
bedīy sapanis pānay pānas
ada kami gili phōl lalli pamposh

Traversing the field of void alone,
 I, Lallā, lost consciousness of myself.
 On finding the secret of my Self,
 a lotus bloomed in the mud for Lallā.¹¹

¹¹ In Indian literature, the lotus is used to symbolize the higher self that emerges out of the entangled world of senses.

36

गगन ज्ञाय बूतल ज्ञाय
 ज्ञाय छुख द्यन पवन त राथ
 अर्ग चन्दन पोश पोत्र ज्ञाय
 ज्ञाय छुख सोरुय त लांगिजिय क्याह

gagan tsäy būtal tsäy
tsäy chukh दें pavan ta rāth
arg tsandan poś poñ tsäy
tsäy chukh soruy ta lägiziy kyāh

You are the sky,
 and you are the earth.
 You are the day,
 the night and the wind.
 You are grain,
 sandalwood, flowers, and water.
 You are everything—
 what should I offer you?

37

लतन हुन्द माज़ लायोंम वतन
 अकिय हावनम अकिचिय वथ
 यिम यिम बोज़न तिम कोन् मतन
 ललि बूज़ शतन कुनिय कथ

latan hund māz lāryom vatan
akiy hävnam akiciy vath
yim yim bozan tim kona matan
lalli būz shatan kuniy kath

Soles of my feet wore off
 on different paths.
 Only one showed me the true path.
 Those who hear this,
 why aren't they enamored?
 Lallā heard but one word
 in a hundred words.

38

प॑रुम पोलुम अपोरुय पुरुम
 केसर॑ वन॒ वोलुम र॑टिथ शाल
 परस॑ प्रोनुम त॒ पानस॑ पोलुम
 अद् गोम॑ मोलूम त॒ ज्जीनिम॑ हाल

parum polum apōruy purum
kesara vana volum raṭith śāl
paras prōnum ta pānas polum
ada gom molūm ta zīnim hāl

What I read, I followed.
 The unreadable I realized
 through direct experience.
 I tamed the lion¹² from the forest like a jackal.
 My teachings for others, I followed myself.
 Then I attained knowledge
 and achieved my goal.

¹² The lion is a metaphor for desires that continually entangle humans in worldly affairs. The subduing of desires is represented by the transformation of the lion into the jackal.

39

च्यथ नोवुय ज़ंदरम नोवुय
 ज़लमय ड्यूतुम नवम नोवुय
 यन् प्यठ ललि म्यं तन-मन नावुय
 तन् लल बोह नवम नवय छयस

tsěth nōvuy tsandaram nōvuy
zalamay dyūṭhum navam nōvuy
yana pētha lalli mē tan man nāvuy
tana lalla bōh navam navay chēs

The consciousness is new,
 and the moon is new.
 I saw the whole universe
 moment by moment renewed.
 Ever since I, Lallā, cleansed
 my body and mind,
 I, Lallā, have become ever renewed.

40

दमी डीठम नद वहवनी
 दमी ड्यूठुम सुम नत् तार
 दमी डीठम थर् फल्लवनी
 दमी ड्यूठुम गुल नत् खार

damī dīṭham nad vahavanī
damī dyūṭhum sum nata tār
damī dīṭham thara phōlavani
damī dyūṭhum gul nata khār

Just now I saw a flowing river.
 And then I saw a vast expanse of water
 without a bridge or a ferry.
 Just now I saw a shrub
 with blooming flowers
 and then I saw neither flowers nor thorns.¹³

¹³ Lallā imagines herself outside time as she surveys the coming into existence and disappearance into nothingness of the objects and processes of the material world. The "flowing river," the "lake," the "shrub with blossoming flowers, the "fire ablaze in the hearth" all come and go.

41

ललु बोह द्रायस लोलु रे
 छांडान लूस्तुम द्यन क्योह राथ
 वुछुम पंडिथ पननि गरे
 सुय म्यं रोटमस न्यछतुर त साथ

lalla bōh drāyas lola re
tshāṇḍān lūstum dyēn kyōh rāth
vuchum paṇḍith panani gare
suy mē rōṭamas nēchtur ta sāth

Full of love I set out.
 Day and night I spent searching.
 In my own home I met the Paṇḍit.
 I caught him and this was
 my auspicious moment.

42

परुन स्वलब पालुन द्वर्लब
 सहज गारुन सिखिम त् क्रूठ
 अब्यासकि गनिरय शास्त्र मोटुम
 त्रीतन् आनन्द न्यश्चय गोम

parun svalab pālun dvarlab
sahaz gārun sikhim ta krūṭh
abyāsaki ganiray shāstra mōṭhum
tsītan ānand nēshcay gom

Easy to read, but hard to follow.
 Attaining self-knowledge
 is subtle and difficult.
 Absorbed in practice,
 I forgot the scriptures—
 consciousness-bliss I realized.

43

यि यि करम कोरुम सुह अर्चुन
 यि रसनि वोच्चोरुम तिय मंथर
 युहय लोगमो दिहस पर्चुन
 सुय यि परम शिवुन तंथर

*yi yi karam kōrum suh artsun
 yi rasani vōtsorum tiy manthr
 yuhai lōgamo dihas partsun
 suy yi parama śivun tanthr*

Deeds I performed became offerings.
 Words I spoke became mantra.
 Experiences my body had
 were for self-knowledge.
 This is the essence of Śiva's way.

44

मल वोन्दि ज़ोलुम
 जिगर मोरुम
 त्यलि लल नाव द्राम
 यलि दलि त्राविमस तती

mal vōṇdi zolum
jigar morum
tēli lalla nāv drām
yali dali trāvīmas tatī

Impurities of the heart I burned.
 Desires I killed.
 Lallā, my name, shone only
 when I surrendered completely.

The Light of Consciousness



45

ज्ञाय दीव् गर्तस त् दर्ती स्रज्जख
 च्ये दीव् दित्थि क्रञ्ज्जन् प्राण
 ज्ञाय दीव् ठनि र्स्तुय वज्जख
 कुस ज्ञानि दीव् चोन परिमान

tsäy dīva gartas ta dartī srazakh
tsëy dīva ditith kranzan prān
tsäy dīva ṭhani rōstuy vazakh
kus zāni dīva con parimān

You, god, permeate the creation on the earth.
 You, god, give life to matter.
 You, god, resonate without sound.
 Who can fathom you?

46

दमाह दम कोरमस दमनहाले
 प्रजल्योम दीफ त ननेयम जाथ
 अन्द्रियुम प्रकाश न्यंबर छोटुम
 गटि रोटुम त करमस थफ

*damāh dam kōrmās damanhāle
 prazalyom dīph ta nañeyam zāth
 andrium prakāśa nēbar tshōṭum
 gaṭi roṭum ta karmas thaph*

Slowly through practicing breath control,
 the lamp shone
 and I saw my true nature.
 The inner light I realized—
 caught it in darkness and seized it.

47

ग्यानुकि अम्बर पारिथ तने
 यिम पद ललि दपि तिम ह्यदि आंख
 कारनु प्रनुवकि लयि कोर लले
 ज्यथ-ज्योति कासन मरुन्य शांख

gyanki ambar päriṭh tane
yim pad lalli dapi tim hrēdi aṅkh
kārana pranavaki layi kōr lalle
tsēṭh-jyoti kāsan maranañi shaṅkh

Wear the garments of wisdom.
 Inscribe verses recited by Lallā
 in your heart.
 Through *praṇava*¹⁴ Lallā was absorbed
 in the light of consciousness.
 She overcame the fear of death.

¹⁴ *Praṇava* involves meditation on the sacred syllable Om.

48

ज्यदानंदस ग्यान् प्रकाशस
 यिमव ज्यून तिम जीवन्ती मोख्त
 व्यशमस सम्सारुनिस पाशयस
 अबोध गंडाह शथ शथ दितिय

tsēdānandas gyāna prakāśas
yimav tsyūn tim zīvantī mōkht
vēśamas samsāranis pāśyas
abōdh gaṇḍah śath śath ditiy

Those who achieve light-consciousness-bliss
 are liberated while alive.
 Tangled in the net of worldly existence,
 ignorant people tie a hundred knots.

49

परान परान ज्यव ताल फंजिम
 च्यं युगि क्रिय तंजिम न जांह
 सुमरन फिरान न्योठ त ओंगज गंजिम
 मनच दुयि मालि ब्रजिम न जांह

parān parān zyav tāl phajim
tsě yugi kriy tajim na zānh
sumran phirān nyoth ta ōngaj gajim
manaca duyī māli tsajim na zānh

Reading and reciting continuously
 turned my tongue and palate sore—
 I never found a practice befitting you.
 Turning the rosary beads
 wore out my thumb and finger—
 yet my mind's confusion, my dear,
 did not leave me.

50

ग्वरन वो॒न॒नम कु॒नुय व॒च्चुन
 न्य॒बर दो॒प॒नम अ॒न्द॒रय अ॒च्चुन
 सु॒य गव ल॒लि म्य॑ वा॒ख त॒ व॒च्चुन
 तव॒य म्य॑ ह्यो॒तुम नंग॑य न॒च्चुन

gvaran vōnanam kunuy vatsun
nēbara dōpanam andaray atsun
suy gav lalli mē vākh ta vatsun
tavay mē hyōtum nangay natsun

My guru gave me only one advice—
 from outside transfer the attention within.
 That became Lallā's initiation—
 that is why I began to wander naked.

51

असी आसि तय असीय आसव
 असिय दोर करि पतवथ
 शिवस सोरि न् ज्योन त् मरुन
 रवस सोरि न् अतगथ

asī āsi tay asīy āsav
asiy dor kari patavath
śivas sori na zyōn ta marun
ravas sori na atagath

In the past we existed,
 in the future we shall be,
 and through the ages we have been.
 Śiva continues to create and destory
 just as the sun continues to rise and set.

52

दमी डीठम गज दज्जवनीं
 दमी ड्यूठुम दह न त नार
 दमी डीठम पाण्डवन हन्ज मांजी
 दमी डीठम क्रांजी मास

damī dīṭham gaj dazvanī
damī dyūṭhum dah na ta nār
damī dīṭham pāṇḍvan hanz mājī
damī dīṭham krājī mās

Just now I saw
 a fire ablaze in the hearth.
 And then I saw
 neither smoke nor fire.
 Just now I saw
 the mother of Pāṇḍavas
 and then I saw her
 as the aunt in the potter's house.¹⁵

¹⁵ This verse is a metaphor for the shifting fortunes in the material world. The reference here is specifically to the story of the Pāṇḍavas' fortune and misfortune in the Mahābhārata.

53

द्वादशान्तु मंडल यस दीवस थजि
 नासिक पवन दारि अनाहत रव
 स्वयम कल्पन अतिह त्रिजि
 पानय सु दीव त अर्चुन कस

dvādashānta maṇḍal yas dīvas thaji
nāsika pavana dāri anāhata rav
svayam kalpan antih tsaji
pānay su dīv ta artsun kas

Whoever realizes *brahmarandhra* cakra
 as the abode of the deity,
 hears the all-pervasive,
 unobstructed sound through breath control
 and ends self-delusion,
 she herself is the deity.
 Then who should she worship?

54

कुस डिंगि त कुस जागि
 कुस सर वतरि तेलिय
 कुस हरस पूजि लागि
 कुस परमपद मेलिय

kus dingi ta kus zāgi
kus sar vatari teliy
kus haras pūzi lāgi
kus paramapad meliy

Who is asleep
 and who is awake?
 From which lake does water ooze out?
 What can be offered in worship to god?
 What supreme state
 is to be attained?

55

मन डिंगि त् अक्वल ज़ागि
 दाडय सर पंच-याँदि वतरि तेलिय
 स्वव्यचार पोत्र हरस पूजि लागि
 परमपद त्रीतन शिव मेलिय

man dingi ta akval zāgi
dāḍi sar pañtsa yaṇdi vatari tehiy
svavētsāra poñ haras pūzi lāgi
paramapad tsītan śiva meliy

Mind is asleep,
 and the nameless Self is awake.
 Five sense organs are the lake
 from which water constantly oozes.
 Self-introspection is the oblation to god.
 Śiva consciousness
 is the supreme state to be achieved

56

शिव गुर तय कीशव पलुनस
 ब्रह्मा पायर्यन वोलास्यस
 यूगी यूग-कलि परजान्यस
 कुस दीव अश्ववार प्यठ चडयस

śiva gur tay kiśava palanas
brahmā pāyṛēn vōlāsēs
yūgī yūg kali parzānēs
kus dīva ashvavār pēṭh ceḍyēs

Śiva is the horse,
 Keśava is the saddle
 and Brahmā is on the stirrups.
 A yogi through yogic practice
 recognizes the One
 riding the horse.

57

अनाहत ख-स्वरूप शून्यालय
 यस नाव न वरन न गुथर न रूप
 अहं विमर्श नाद-ब्यंदय यस वो न
 सुय दीव अश्ववार प्यठ चडयस

anāhata kha-svarūp śūnyālay
yas nāv na varan na guthr na rūp
ahaṃ vimarśa nād-bēṇday yas vōn
suy dīva ashvavār pēṭh ceḍēs

The unstruck sound of Om,¹⁶
 all permeating,
 whose abode is void,
 without name,
 colour, caste or form.
 Self-introspection reveals
 the unsounded resonance.
 That is the deity riding the horse.

¹⁶ This specific Kāshmirī Śaiva practice involves developing focused attention through disengaging oneself from sensory perceptions, withdrawing within, and exercising breath control and silent absorption in the sound Om.

58

शिशिरस वुथ कुस रटे
 कुस ब्वके रटे वाव
 युस पाँछ यिंदरय च्यलिथ चटे
 सुय रटे गटे रव

shishiras vuth kus raṭe
kus bōke raṭe vāv
yus pāntsh yindray tsēlith tsāṭe
suy raṭe gaṭe rav

Who can stop the drip from icicles?
 Who can hold air in the palm?
 She who controls the five sense organs
 sees the sun in the darkness.

59

च्यत॒ तुर्ग॑ गगन॒ ब्रम॒वोन॑
 निमि॒शि अकि॑ छन्डि॒ यूज॑न् लछ
 च्यत॒नि वगि॑ ब्वदि॒ रंति॑थ ज्ञोन
 प्राण॑-अपान॒ सन्दा॑रिथ पख॒च

tsēta turg gagna bramavon
nimiśi aki tshaṇḍi yūzan lach
tsētani vagi bōdi raṭith zon
prān-apān sandārith pakhac

The mind-horse wanders all over
 with the flicker of an eyelid,
 traveling a hundred thousand leagues.
 Whoever holds the reins
 with self-restraint and discrimination,
 succeeds in controlling
 the inhaled and the exhaled breath.

60

अव्यासी सव्यकास लय वो॒धू
 गग॒नस सगुन म्यूल समि॒त्रटा
 शून्य गो॒ल त अनामय मो॒तू
 युहो॒य वो॒पदी॑श छुय बटा

abyāsī savyakās laya vōthū
gaganas sagun myūl samitsraṭā
śūnya gōl ta anāmay mōtū
yuhōy vōpadīś chuy baṭā

Through constant practice,
 the objective reality is withdrawn.
 The world of forms and colors
 suddenly merges with the void.
 When the void disappears,
 nameless consciousness remains.
 This is my teaching, Paṇḍit!

61

ज्ञ न बोह न देय न द्यान
 गौ पानय सर्वक्रिय मंशिथ
 अन्यव द्यूतुख केँछ न अन्वय
 गय सथ लयि पर पंशिथ

tṣa na bōh na deya na dyān
gav pānay sarva kriy maśith
anyav dyūṭhukh keñtsh na anvay
gayi sath layi par paśith

Neither you nor I,
 and neither meditation
 nor the object of meditation exist.
 The All-doer forgets Himself.
 The blind find this meaningless.
 The wise become one
 with this supreme state.

62

द्यन छयजि त् रजन आसे
 बूतल गगनस कुन व्यकासे
 चन्द्र राह ग्रोस मावसे
 शिव-पूजुन गौ चित्तात्मसे

dēn tshēzi ta razan āse
būtal gaganas kun vēkāse
tsandar rāh grōs māvase
śiva puzun gav tsittātmase

The day passes into the night.
 The earth reaches out for the sky.
 On the day of the new moon,
 the moon swallows Rāhu.¹⁷
 Śiva's worship is the realization
 of the self as consciousness.

¹⁷ Rāhu is the demon of eclipse in Indian mythology.

63

तुरि सलिल॒ खोत॒ तय॒ तुरे
 ह्यामि॒ त्रे गय॒ ब्यो॒न-अब्यो॒न व्यम॒र्शा
 त्रैत॒न्य रव॒ बाति॒ सब॒ समे
 शिव॒मय॒ त्ररा॒त्रर॒ जग॒ पश्या

tūri salila khōta tay tūre
hēmi trē gay byōn abyōn vēmarśā
tsaitani rav bāti sab same
śivamay tsarātsar zag paśya

Cold changes water into ice or snow.
 Discernment shows the three different states
 are not really different.
 When the sun of consciousness shines,
 the plurality is dissolved into oneness.
 The universe appears throughout permeated
 with Śiva.

64

शील त् मान छुय पोत्र क्रंजे
 म्वछि यमि रोट मलि योद वाव
 होस्त युस मस्त वाल गन्डे
 ति यस तगि तय सु अद् न्यहाल

shīl ta mān chuy poñ kranje
mōchi yami rot mali yōd vāv
hosta yus mastavāl gaṇḍe
ti yas tagi tay su ada nēhāl

Name and fame
 are like water in a sieve.
 Whoever has strength
 to hold air in a fist
 and tie an elephant
 with a strand of hair
 will certainly attain bliss.

The House of Nectar



65

छांडान लूसस पा॑निय-पानस
 छयपिथ ग्यानस वोतुम न॒ कूँछ
 लय क॑रमस त॒ वा॑न्नस अलथानस
 बरि बरि बान॒ त॒ च्यवान न॒ कूँह

tshāṇḍān lūsas pāniy pānas
tshēpith gyānas votum na kuñtsh
lay karmas ta vātsas althānas
bari bari bāna ta cēvān na kūnh

Arduous was my search for the Self.
 Nothing compares to the hidden knowledge.
 Self-absorption led me
 to the house of nectar—
 cups I found filled to the brim,
 but nobody was drinking.

66

यि क्याह आसिथ यि क्युथ रंग गोम
 चंग गोम त्रटिथ हुद हुदन्तीय दंगय
 सारिनिय पदन कुनिय वखुन प्योम
 ललि म्यं त्राग गोम लग् कमि शाठय

yi kyāh äsith yih kyuth raṅg gom
caṅg gom tsaṭith huda hudanēy dagay
sāriniy padan kunuy vakhun pyom
lalli mē trāg gom laga kami shāṭhay

What was I
 and what has become of me?
 My attachments are severed.
 All verses echo only one thing.
 I, Lallā, have become a lake.
 Where shall I find my shore?

67

श्यं वन त्रटिथ शशिकल वुज्जम
 प्रक्रथ हन्जम पवन सांती
 लोलकि नार् वालिज बुज्जम
 शंकर लोबुम तमिय सांती

*śē van tsatith śaśikal vuzam
 prakrath hanzam pavana sāti
 lolaki nāra vālinj buzam
 śaṅkara lobum tamiy sāti*

After traversing six forests,¹⁸
 I awakened the orb of the moon.
 By controlling my breath,
 I gave up attachment to worldly things.
 I roasted my heart
 in the fire of love—
 I found Śaṅkara that way.

¹⁸ The “six forests” refer to the six cakras or energy centers along the spine— *mūlādhāra*, *svādhīsthāna*, *maṇipura*, *anāhata*, *viśuddhā*, *ājñā*

68

मंकिरस ज्ञन मल ज्ञोलुम मनस
 अद् म्यं लंभुम ज्ञनस ज्ञान
 सुह यलि द्युतुम निशि पानस
 सोरुय सुय त् बोह नो केन्ह

*makaris zan mal tsōlum manas
 ada mē labam zanas zān
 suh yali dyūṭhum nishi pānas
 soruy suy ta bōh no keñh*

Impurities of my mind
 were wiped away as from a mirror,
 and I attained self-knowledge.
 I saw him near me—
 He is everything,
 and I am nothing.

69

लल॒ बो॒ह॒ ज्ञाय॑स॒ स्वम॑न॒ बाग॒बर॑स
 वुछु॑म॒ शिव॑स॒ शक्थ॑ मीलिथ॒ त॒ वाह॑
 तति॑ लय॒ क॑रुम॒ अमृ॑तसरस
 जि॒न्दय॑ मर॑स॒ त॒ म्य॑ करि॒ क्याह॑

lalla bōh tsāyas svamana bāgabarās
vuchum śivas śakath mīlith ta vāh
tati lay karam amritsarās
zinday maras ta mē kari kyāh

I, Lallā, entered the door
 to the garden of my mind.
 I saw Śiva and Śakti in communion.
 I became immersed in the nectar of bliss.
 I died while still alive—
 nothing worries me.

70

मद प्योम स्यादि जलन यूत
 रंगन लीलमि कर्यम क्च
 कति ख्ययम मनशि मामसकि नली
 स्वय बोह लल त गव म्य क्याह

mad pyōm syandi zalan yūt
raṅgan līlami karyam katsa
kati khyēm manaśi māmasaki nalī
svay bōh lalla ta gav mē kyāh

I drank wine as the water from Sindhu.
 How many roles did I play on the world stage?
 How many pieces of meat¹⁹ did I eat?
 I am still the same Lallā—
 nothing happened to me.

¹⁹ The third line of the Kashmīrī verse has an archaic expression whose meaning has been lost. Its literal meaning “pieces of human flesh” does not make sense in the context of Lallā’s life and verses. Grierson interprets the expression as a metaphor for human experience (p. 97).

71

नियम कर्योथ गर्बा
 ज्यतस कर्बा प्ययी
 मरन् ब्रोंठय मरबा
 मरिथ त् मरतब् हरिय

niyam karyoth garbā
tsētas karbā pyēy
marana bronṭhay marbā
marith ta martaba hariy

When will you remember
 the vow you made in the womb?
 Die before your death.
 Then at death you will attain a higher state.

72

हा मनशि क्याजि छुख वुठान स्यकि लवर
 अमि रटि हा मालि पकिय न नाव
 ल्यूखुय यि नारा'नि कर्मनि राखि
 ति मालि ह्यकिय न फीरिथ कान्ह

hā manaśi kyāzi chukh vuṭhān sēki lavar
ami raṭi hā māli pakiy na nāv
lyūkhuy yi nārāni karmani rākhi
ti māli hēkiy na phīrith kāñh

O, Fellow Being! Why are you twisting
 a rope of sand?
 By holding on to this rope,
 my dear, the boat will not move.
 Whatever god has written in your karma
 nobody, my dear, can change.²⁰

²⁰ The expression "twisting a rope of sand" refers to futile effort people engage in to achieve self-realization.

73

मन॑सय मान बव॒ सरस
छयूर॑ कूप नेरयस नारुख॒ छोख
ल्यका॑ ल्यख युद् तुला कोटि
तुलि॑ तूल त॒ तुल न॒ के॒ह

manasay mān bavsaras
chyūr kūpa nerēs nārukḥ chōkh
lēkā lēkh yuda tulā kōṭi
tuli tūl ta tul na keṅh

Consider your mind
an ocean of earthly existence.
If not restrained,
fiery words will burst out in anger.
If weighed on a scale,
these words have no mass.

74

केंह छिय न्यंद्रि हती वुदी
 केंन्न वुद्यन न्यसर प्ययी
 केंह छिय स्नान करिथ अपूती
 केंह छिय गेह बज्जिथ ति अकयी

keñh chiy nyëndrihatī vudī
keñtsan vudēn nēsar pēyī
keñh chiy snān karith apūtī
keñh chiy geh bazith ti akriyī

Some though asleep are awake,
 some while awake have fallen asleep,
 some are dirty after a bath,
 and some even as householders
 are totally detached.

75

जल च्यत्ता वो॒न्दस बयि मो बर
 चोन चि॒त्थ करान पान॒ अनाद
 च्य॑ को ज॒ननि ख्यो॒द हरि कर
 कीवल तसु॑दुय तारुक नाद

tsal tsëttā vōndas bayi mo bar
con tsinth karān pāna anād
tsë ko zanani khyōd hari kar
kīval tasunduy tāruk nād

Fickle Mind,
 don't be overcome by fear!
 You are cared for
 by the beginningless source.
 You do not know
 when your hunger is satiated.
 Meditate only on
 the all-permeating unobstructed sound.

76

यव॒ त्र॒ जलि॒ तिम॒ अंब॑र ह्य॒ता
 ख्यो॒द यव॒ गलि॒ तिम॒ आ॒हार॒ अन्न॑
 व्य॑त्ता॒ स्व॒ पर॒ व्य॑न्नारस॒ प्य॒ता
 ज्ञे॒न्त॒न यि॒ दी॒ह व॒नका॑वन

yava tūr tsali tim ambar hētā
khyōd yava gali tim āhār ann
tsēttā sva para vyētsāras pētā
tsentan yi dīh vankāvan

Wear the clothes
 that protect you from cold.
 Eat that food
 which satisfies your hunger.
 Mind, meditate on the Self.
 Consider this body to be food
 for forest ravens.

77

ख्यन् ख्यन् करान कुन नो वातख
 न् ख्यन गछ्छख अहंकारी
 सोमुय ख्यं मालि सोमुय आसख
 समि ख्यन् मुत्तरनय बरन्यन तारी

khēna khēna karān kun no vātaḥ
na khēna gatshakh ahaṅkāri
sōmuy khē māli sōmuy āsakh
sami khēna mutsaranay barñen tāri

Indulging in eating
 will lead you nowhere.
 By refraining from eating,
 you will become egotistical.
 By eating moderately,
 you will achieve equanimity.
 By practicing moderation,
 the closed doors will be unbolted.

78

ख्यथ गण्डिथ शमि न॒ मानस
 ब्रांथ यिमव त्राव॑ तिमय गय खसिथ
 शास्त्र बूजिथ छु यम् बय कूर
 सु न॒ पो॒न्न त॒ दनी लसिथ

khēth gaṇḍith shami na mānas
brānth yimav trāv timay gay khasith
shāstra būzith chu yama bay krūr
su na pōtsa ta danī lasith

Tranquility is not achieved
 by only eating and clothing oneself.
 Those who give up false hopes
 attain their goal.
 Listening only to scriptures
 intensifies the fear of death.
 Whoever does not lean on them flourishes.

79

अकुय ओमकार युस नाबि दरे
 क्वम्बय ब्रह्माण्डस सुम गरे
 अख सुय मन्थर च्यतस करे
 तस सास मन्थर क्या करे

akuy oṃkār yus nābi dare
kōmbay brahmāṇḍas sum gare
akh suy manthr tsētas kare
tas sās manthr kyā kare

Whoever holds an Oṃ in the navel,
 and through breath control
 raises it to *brahmarandhra*—
 absorbed in only this mantra,
 he has no need for other mantras.

80

जलं थमवुन हुतवह त्रनावुन
 ऊर्ध्वगमन् पौरिव त्रयथ
 काठदेनि द्वद श्रमनावुन
 अन्तिह सकलु कपठ त्रयथ

zal thamavun hutvah tūrnāvun
ūrdvagamana pairiv tsarēth
kāṭhadeni dvad shramnāvun
antih sakalu kapath tsarēth

Stopping the rain
 and extinguishing the fire,
 levitation
 and milking a wooden cow—
 in the end, all this is deceitful exhibition.

81

कलन काल् जालि योदवय त्र्यं गोल
 व्यन्दिव गेह व व्यन्दिव वनवास
 ज्ञानिथ सर्वगथ प्रोबु अमोल
 युथुय ज्ञानख त्युथुय आस

kalan kāla zāli yōdvay tsě gol
věndiv geh va věndiv vanvās
zānith sarvagath prōbu amōl
yuthuy zānakh tyuthuy ās

As your longings disappear,
 whether you are a householder or a recluse,
 you realize god as pure and all pervading.
 What you perceive is what you will attain.

82

पर तय पान यमि सोम मोन
 यमि ह्युह मोन द्यन क्योह राथ
 यमिसय अद्वय मन सांन्युन
 तमिय इययूतुय सुरग्वरनाथ

par tay pān yēmi sōm mon
yēmi hyuh mon dēn kyoh rāth
yēmisay advay man sānpun
tamiy dyūthuy suragvarnāth

Whoever experiences
 the self and the other as equal,
 the day and the night as the same,
 and whoever frees the mind of duality,
 has the vision of the lord of creation.

83

शिव छुय थलि थलि रोज्ञान
 मो ज्ञान ह्योद त् मुसलमान
 त्रुक अय छुख त् पान पनुन पर्जनाव
 स्वय छै साहिबस सांत्य ज्ञानी ज्ञान

śiva chuy thali thali rozān
mo zān hyōnd ta musalmān
truk ay chukh ta pān panun parzanāv
svay chay sāhibas sātya zānī zān

Śiva is omnipresent.
 Don't differentiate between
 Hindus and Muslims.
 If you are wise,
 you will recognize your true Self—
 that is your real acquaintance with the lord.

84

युह यि कर्म करि प्यतुरुन पानस
 अर्जुन बर्जुन ब्ययिस क्युत
 अन्तिह लागि-रोस्तु पुशिरुन स्वात्मस
 अद यूर्य गछु त तूर्य छुम ह्योत

*yuh yi karm kari pëtarun pānas
 arzun barzun bëyis kyut
 antih lāgi-rōst puširun svātmas
 ada yūri gatsha ta tūri chum hyōt*

Responsibility for your actions
 you must bear—
 others share their fruits.
 Without attachment,
 I offer my actions to the Self.
 Wherever I go is all right with me.

85

करम ज़ह कारन त्रेह क्वम्बिथ
 यव लबख परलूकस आंख
 वोथ खस सूर्यमंडल च्वम्बिथ
 तवय ज़लिय मरनन्य शांख

karam zah kāran treh kōmbith
yava labakh paralūkas āṅkh
vōth khas sūryamaṇḍal tsōmbith
tavay tsaliy maranañi shāṅkh

Two types of actions
 and three are the causes.²¹
 Through *kumbhaka*,²²
 you will find the other world.
 Arise, ascend
 and pierce the sun's disc.
 That is how you will lose the fear of death.

²¹ The causes, leading to limited perception, are the three types of impurities or *malas*—*āṇavamala*, *māyīyamala*, *karmamala*.

²² *Kumbhaka* is a yogic practice of breath control.

86

यहै मात्रि-रूपि पय दिये
 यहै बार्य रूपि करि विशीश
 यहै माय रूपि अन्ति जुव ह्ये
 शिव छुय क्रूठ त चेन वोपदीश

yahai mātri-rūpi pay diye
yahai bārya rūpi kari viśīsh
yahai māya rūpi anti zuv hēye
śiva chuy krūṭh ta tsen vōpadīsh

As mother she suckles the child.
 As wife she performs yet another role.
 As *māyā*, she dissolves in the end.²³
 To attain Śiva is difficult –
 heed my advice.

²³ The word "*māyā*" refers to the material world as an illusion.

87

कुस मरि तय कसू मारन
 मरि कुस तय मारन् कस्
 युस हर-हर त्राविथ गर गर करे
 अद् सु मरि तय मारन तस

kus mari tay kasū māran
mari kus tay māran kas
yus hara hara trāvith gara gara kare
ada su mari tay māran tas

Who will die
 and who will be killed?
 Who will it kill and who will kill it?
 Whoever quits chanting "hara,"
 and instead recites "gara," "gara"²⁴
 is the one who dies and the one who is killed.

²⁴ "Hara" is a term commonly used to refer to God Viṣṇu and "gara" means "home" in Kashmirī. In this verse, chanting "gara" refers to one's preoccupation with worldly affairs.

88

ग्वर शब्दस युस यछ पछ बरे
 ग्यान् वगि रटि च्यत् त्वर्गस
 यन्द्रयै शोमरिथ आनंद करे
 अद् कुस मरि तय मारन कस

gvara shabdas yus yatsh patsh bare
gyāna vagi raṭi tsēta tōrgas
yandrai shōmrith ānand kare
ada kus mari tay māran kas

Whoever trusts the guru's words
 seizes the mind-horse
 with the reins of knowledge.
 Whoever controls the senses,
 attains bliss.
 Then who will die and who will be killed?

89

टयोठ मोदुर तय म्यूठ ज़हर
 यस युथ छुनुख जतन बाव
 यमि यथ करुय कल त् कहर
 सु तथ शहर वातिथ प्यव

tyōṭh mōdur tay myūṭh zahr
yas yuth chunukh jatan bāv
yēmi yath karuy kal ta kahar
su tath śahar vātiith pēv

Bitter is sweet
 and sweet is poisonous.
 Effort and single-minded devotion
 determine the final achievement.

90

ज्ञालुन छु वुज्जमल त त्रटय
 ज्ञालुन छु मँदिन्यन गटकार
 ज्ञालुन छु पान पनुन कडुन ग्रटय
 हँत मालि सन्तूश वाती पानय

tsālun chu vuzmala ta traṭay
tsālun chu mandinēn gaṭakār
tsālun chu pān panun kaḍun graṭay
hēta māli santūsh vātī pānay

Endure lightning and thunder.
 Endure darkness at noon.
 Endure passing through the grinding mill.
 If you are content, dear,
 he will come to you.

91

य॑म्य लू॒ब मन्मथ॑ मद च्चू॒र मोरुन॑
 वत॑ नाशि मा॑रिथ त॒ लो॒गुन दास॑
 त॑मिय सहज॒ ईश्वर॑ गोरुन
 तमिय॑ सोरुय व्यो॒न्दुन स्वास॑

yěmi lūb manmath mad tsūr morun
vata nāshi mārith ta logun dās
tamiy sa haz īśvara gorun
tamiy soruy vyōndun svās

Whoever kills greed, lust, and ego
 and then serves people with humility,
 yearns for an all pervading god
 and perceives everything else as ashes.

92

शिव-शिव करान हम्स-गथ स्वरिथ
 रूज्जिथ व्यवहारि द्यन क्योह राथ
 लागि रोस्त अद्वय युस् मन करिथ
 तसि न्यथ प्रसन सुरग्वरनाथ

śiva śiva karān haṃsa-gath svarith
rūzith vēvahāri dēn kyōha rāth
lāgi-rōst advya yus man karith
tasi nēth prasan suragvarnāth

Whoever recites the name of Śiva
 and meditates on *haṃsa*,²⁵
 conducting worldly activities
 day and night
 and liberating his mind
 from desires and duality,
 always pleases the lord of creation.

²⁵ *Haṃsa*, a breath control practice, is a basic meditation in the Śaiva tradition.

The wine of Lalla's Verses



93

सं॒न्न॒सस॒ न॒ सा॒तस॒ प॒न्न॒सस॒ न॒ रु॒मस॒
 सु॒ मस॒ म्यं॑ ल॒लि च्य॑व प॒ननु॑य वा॒ख
 अ॒ंद॒रि॒म ग॒टख॑ र॒टि॒थ त॒ वो॒लु॒म
 त्र॒टि॒थ त॒ द्यु॒त॒मस॑ तै॒तिय॑ चा॒ख

satsasas na sātas patsasas na rumas
su mas mē lalli cēv pananuy vākh
andarim gaṭakh raṭith ta volum
tsaṭith ta dyutmas tatiy cākh

I did not pause for the right moment.
 I did not trust anything.
 The wine I, Lallā, drank
 was my own verses.
 I caught the inner darkness,
 gathered it
 and tore it into shreds.

94

आयस ति स्योदुय त् गच्छ ति स्योदुय
 स्यदिस होल म्यं कर्यम क्याह
 बोह तस आसंस आगरय व्यञ्जय
 व्यदिस त् व्यदिस कर्यम क्याह

āyas ti syōduy ta gatsha ti syōduy
syadis hōl mē karēm kyāh
bōh tas āsas āgaray vēzay
vēdis ta vēndis karēm kyāh

I came here directly
 and I will return directly.
 What can wickedness do
 to my simple and honest nature?
 I am known to the beginningless source.
 As its acquaintance and loved one,
 no harm can come to me.

95

वाख मानस क्वल अक्वल न् अते
 छवपि मुद्रि अति ना प्रवीश
 रोज्ञान शिव-शकथ ना अते
 म्वतियै कुँह त् सुय वोपदीश

vākh mānas kval akval nā ate
tshvapi mudri ati nā pravīsh
rozān śiva śakath nā ate
mōtiyay kuñh ta suy vōpadīsh

Speech or mind and
 manifest or transcendent
 have no existence there.
 Yogic silence has no place there.
 Śiva and Śakti don't live there.
 Seek whatever is left—
 that is my advice.

96

तंथर गलि तय मंथर म्वच्चे
 मंथर गोल तय मोतुय च्यथ
 च्यथ गोल तय केंहति ना कुने
 शून्यस शून्याह मीलित्थ गौ

tanthr gali tay manthr mōtse
manthr gōl tay motuy tsēth
tsēth gōl tay keñhti nā kune
śūnyas śūnyāh mīlith gav

When teachings disappear,
 the mantra remains.
 When the mantra disappears,
 consciousness remains.
 When consciousness disappears,
 nothing remains.
 Nothingness merges with nothingness.

97

अज्ञपा गायत्री हम्स् हम्स् जपिथ
 अहम् त्राविथ सुय अद् रठ
 यम्य त्रोव अहं सुय रूद पानय
 बोह न् आसुन छुय वोपदीश

azapā gāyatrī haṃsa haṃsa zapith
ahaṃ trāvith suy ada rath
yēmi trov ahaṃ suy rūd pānay
bōh na āsun chuy vōpadīsh

Recite *haṃsa* with every breath.
 Renounce the self
 and meditate on the Self.
 Whoever renounces the self,
 finds the Self.
 Negating the I-ness is my advice.

98

कन्धौ गेह त्यजि कन्धौ वनवास
 व्यफोल मन न् रटिथ त् वास
 द्यन राथ गंज्रिथ पनुन श्वास
 युथुय छुख त् त्युथुय आस

kandēv geh tēzi kandēv vanvās
vēphōla man na raṭith ta vās
dēn rāth ganzarith panun shvās
yuthuy chukh ta tyuthuy ās

Some renounce their home,
 and some their hermitage.
 All is futile
 if the mind is not under control.
 Meditate on your breath
 day and night,
 and stay wherever you are.

99

कुश पोश तेल दीफ जल ना गछे
 सद्बाव् ग्वर्-कथ युस मनि ह्ये
 शोम्बुहस स्वरि न्यथ पननी यछे
 सदा प्यजे सहज्-अक्रयी ना ज्यये

kuś poś tel dīph zal na gatshe
sadbāva gvara-kath yusa mani hēye
śōmbuhas svari nēth pananī yatshe
sadā pēze sa haz-akriy na zyaye

No need for kuś grass, flowers,
 sesame seeds, lamp, or water.
 Whoever accepts the teacher's words
 in simple faith
 and remembers Śambhu²⁶ daily
 of his own volition,
 absorbed in all-pervasive unobstructed sound,
 becomes liberated.

²⁶ Śambhu is a name for Śiva.

100

कुन्यरै बोझख कुनि नो रोज़ख
 कुनिरन कोरनम हनीयाकार
 कुनय आसिथ द्वन हुन्द जंग गोम
 सुय बेरंग गोम करिथ रंग

*kunēray bozakh kuni no rozakh
 kuniran kōrnam hanīyakār
 kunay āsith dvan hund jaṅg gom
 suy beraṅg gom karith raṅg*

When you grasp non-duality,
 you lose self-consciousness.
 The experience of the unity in duality
 has erased my self-consciousness.
 Even though it is One,
 the conflict from duality persists.
 The colorless One
 has dyed me in worldly colors.

101

गाल गन्डिन्यम बोल पडिन्यम
 दपिन्यम तिय यस यिह रोत्ते
 सहज्ज क्वसमौ पूज्ज करिन्यम
 बोह अम्लान्य त कस क्याह म्वत्ते

gāl gaṇḍinēm bol paḍinēm
dapinēm tiy yas yih rōtse
sahaza kōsmav pūz karinēm
bōh amlāñi ta kas kyāh mōtse

Let them call me names or lecture me.
 Let them call me what they wish.
 Let them offer me flowers of devotion.
 I am untouched—
 so who will gain by it?

102

सहजस शम त् दम नो गछे
 यच्छि नो प्रावख मुक्ति द्वार
 सलिलस लवन जन मीलित गछे
 तोति छुय द्वर्लब सहज व्यञ्जार

*sahazas sham ta dam no gatshe
 yatshi no prāvakh mukti dvār
 salilas lavan zan mīlith gatshe
 toti chuy dvarlab sahaza vyētsār*

For self-knowledge,
 self-restraint and breath control
 are not enough.
 Liberation is not achieved
 through wishing alone.
 Though you are completely absorbed in the Self,
 like salt dissolved in water,
 it is still rare to know the truth about the Self.

103

ग्रट छु फेरान जेरे जेरे
 ओहुकुय जानि ग्रटक छल
 ग्रट यलि फेरि तय जाव्युल नेरे
 गू वाति पानय ग्रटबल

grāṭa chu pherān zere zere
ōhukuy jāni grāṭuk tshal
grāṭa yali pheri tay zāvyul nere
gū vāti pānay grāṭabal

The grindstone moves
 when set in motion.
 The axle knows the mystery
 of the grindstone.
 When the grindstone moves,
 fine flour comes out
 as the wheat moves by itself
 into the grindstone
 to be crushed.²⁷

²⁷ The working of the grindstone is a metaphor for human existence.

104

जननि जायाय रत्य तय कृतिय
 करिथ वोदरस बहु कलीश
 फीरिथ द्वार बजनि वात्य ततिय
 शिव छुय क्रूठ तय ज्ञेन वोपदीश

zanani zāyāy ratiy tay katiy
karith vōdaras bahu klīsh
phīrith dvār bazani vāti tatiy
śiva chuy krūṭh tay tsen vōpadīsh

We are born
 to the mother healthy and fit
 after causing much suffering
 when inside the womb.
 Then we return and wait for the same door.
 Attaining Śiva is difficult—
 heed this advice.

105

अछयन आय त॒ गछुन गछे
 पकुन गछे द्यन क्योह राथ
 योरय आय त॒ तूर्य गछुन गछे
 केह नत॒ केह नत॒ केह नत॒ क्याह

atshĕn āya ta gatshun gatshe
pakun gatshe dĕn kyoh rāth
yoray āya ta tūri gatshun gatshe
keñh nata keñh nata keñh nata kyāh

Birth and death
 occur continually
 as day and night
 come and go.
 From where we came,
 we must return.
 There is something to it.

106

त्रयि न्यंगि सराह सूर्य सरस
 अकि न्यंगि सरस अर्शस जाय
 हरम्बख कौसर अख सुम सरस
 सति न्यंगि सरस शून्याकार

trëyi nēngi sarāh sari saras
aki nēngi saras arśas jāy
harmōkha kauṁsara akh sum saras
sati nēngi saras śūnyākār

Three times I saw
 the lake overflowing.
 Once I saw
 a place to step on to the sky.
 Once I saw a bridge
 from Harmukh to Kaunsar.
 Seven times I saw
 the manifest world vanish into the void.

107

सम्सारस आयस तपसी
 बोद प्रकाश लोबुम सहज
 मरयम नु कान्ह त मर नु कसि
 मर नेछ त लस नेछ

samsāras āyas tapasī
boda prakāśa lōbum sahaḥ
marēm na kāñh ta mara na kañsi
marā nech ta lasa nech

I came to this world a hermit.
 Through meditation on the Self,
 I attained the light of knowledge.
 No one will die for me,
 and I will die for nobody.
 Life and death are the same.

108

यथ सरस सिरिफोल न व्यञ्जी
 तथ सरि सकलय पोञ च्यन
 मृग सृगाल गण्डि जलहस्ती
 ज्यन न ज्यन त तोतुय प्यन

yath saras siriphōl na vētsī
tath sari sakalay poñ cēn
mrag sragāl gaṇḍi zalhastī
zēn na zēn ta tōtuy pēn

All drink from the lake
 that can't hold
 a grain of mustard.
 Deer, jackal,
 rhinoceros, and hippopotamus
 arise from it
 and fall into it.²⁸

²⁸ The lake is a metaphor for the universal consciousness, which is the source of the manifest world. Seen from the perspective of the universal consciousness, the manifest world is just an instant flash that comes into existence and vanishes away.

109

लोलुक नार ललि ल्वलि ललनोवुम
 मरनय म्वयस त रूजस न ज़रै
 रंगरछि ज़ातसइ क्याह न रंग होवुम
 बोह दपुन ज़लुम क्याह सना करै

loluk nār lalli lölli lalanovum
maranay möyas ta rūzas na zarai
raṅgaratshi zātsay kyāh na raṅg hovum
bōh dapun tsalum kyāh sanā karay

I, Lallā, suffered the fire of love.
 Before death,
 I died without a trace.
 Born without color or creed,
 what colors didn't I assume?
 'I-ness' left me—
 What else could I do?

Words of Wisdom



110

रावन् मंजय रावुन रोवुम
 राविथ अथि आयस बवसरै
 असान गिन्दान सहजुइ प्रोवुम
 दपनुय कोरुम पानस सरै

rāvana manzay rāvun rovim
rāvith athi āyas bavasaraī
asān gindān sahaziṽ provum
dapanuy korum pānas sarai

In the midst of being lost,
 I lost the sense of being lost.
 After being lost,
 I found myself in the worldly ocean.
 Laughing and playing,
 I attained the all-pervading Self—
 this philosophy became a part of me.

111

दीव् वटा दीवर वटा
 प्यठ ब्वन् छुय यीक्वाठ
 पूज कस करख हूट बटा
 कर मनस त् पवनस संग्गाठ

dīva vaṭā dīvar vaṭā
pēṭha bōna chuy yīkavāṭh
pūz kas karakh hūṭa baṭā
kar manas ta pavanas sangāṭh

The idol is stone,
 and the temple is stone—
 all one from top to bottom
 Who will you worship, learned Paṇḍit?
 Learn to control your mind and your breath.²⁹

²⁹ All stones come from the same earthly source irrespective of the function they serve. Similarly humans, Lallā says, come from the same source even though they belong to different castes, creeds, and classes.

112

कव॒ छुख॑ दिवान॒ अनिने॑ बछ्छ
 त्रुक॑ अय॒ छुक॑ त॒ अंद॑रय॒ अछ्छ
 शिव॑ छुय॒ अति॑ तय॒ कुन॑ मो गछ्छ
 सहज॑ कथि॒ म्यानि॑ करतो॒ पछ्छ

kava chukh divān anine batsh
truk ay chuk ta andaray atsh
śiva chuy āti tay kun mo gatsh
sahaza kathi myāni karto patsh

Why are you groping like the blind?
 If wise, you will turn your attention within.
 Śiva is there.
 No need to go anywhere else—
 believe my simple words.

113

तल॒ छुय॒ ज्युस॒ तय॒ प्यठ॒ छुख॒ नन्नान॒
 वनत॒ मालि॒ मन॒ क्यथ॒ पन्नान॒ छुय॒
 सोरुय॒ सोम्बरिथ॒ यति॒ छुय॒ म्वन्नान॒
 वनत॒ मालि॒ अन्न॒ क्यथ॒ रोन्नान॒ छुय॒

*tal chuy zyus tay pyetha chukh natsān
 vanta māli man kētha patsān chuy
 soruy sōmbrith yati chuy mōtsān
 vanta māli ann kētha rōtsān chuy*

Below you a pit
 and above it you are dancing.
 Tell me, my dear, how you can depend on it?
 Everything you gather
 is left behind.
 Tell me, my dear,
 how can you enjoy your meal?

114

क्याह बो॒डुख मूह बव॑स॒दरि दारे
 सो॒थ लूरि॑थ प्य॒यिय तम पांख
 यम् बठ क॒रनय का॑ल्य छो॒रदारे
 कव॒ ज॒न का॑सिय म॒रन्य शांख

kyāh bōḍukh mūha bavasadri dāre
sōth lūrith pēyiy tam pāṅkh
yēma baṭh karnay kāli choraḍāre
kava zana kāsiy marnañi shāṅkh

Why are you immersed
 in the sea of illusory pleasures?
 Having destroyed the high banked road,
 you are stuck in the mire.
 At the appointed time,
 death will take you.
 Who will relieve you
 of your fear of death?

115

मुडस ग्यानुच कथ नो वनिजे
 खरस गोर दिनु राविय दोह
 स्यकि शाठस ब्योल नो वविजे
 रावरिजि नु कोम याज्यन तील

muḍas gyānac kath no vanize
kharas gor dina rāviy doh
sēki shāṭhas byol no vavize
rāvrizi na kōm yājñen tīl

Don't talk to a fool about knowledge.
 Giving molasses to a donkey
 is a waste of time.
 Don't plant seeds
 in the sandy riverbank.
 Don't waste oil on bran cakes.

116

प्रथय तीर्थन गच्छान सनयास
 गारान स्वदर्शन म्यूल
 ज्यत्ता परिथ मो न्यशपथ आस
 डेशख दूरे द्रमुन न्यूल

prathay tīrthan gatshān sannyās
gārān svadarśan myūl
tsēṭta parith mo nēshpath ās
ḍeśakh dūre dramun nyūl

A sanyasi goes to holy places
 seeking self-knowledge.
 Mind, in spite of learning,
 don't be directionless—
 from the distance, grass looks greener.

117

अव्यञ्जार्य पोथ्यन छिहो मालि परान
 यिथु तोतु परान राम पंजरस
 गीता परान तु हीथा लबान
 परम गीता तु परान छयस

avētsāri pothēn chiho māli parān
yitha tota parān rāma panjaras
gītā parān ta hīthā labān
param gītā ta parān chēs

Those without discernment, my dear,
 read religious books
 as parrots recite "Rāma" in a cage.
 Reading the Gītā becomes an excuse—
 I have read the Gītā
 and I am still reading it.



118

त्रेशि ब्वछि मो क्रेशिनावुन
 यानि छययि तानि संदारुन दिह
 प्रट चोन दारुन त् पारुन
 कर वोपकारुन स्वय छय क्रिय

treśi bōchi mo kreśināvun
yāni tshěy tāni sandārun dih
phraṭ con dārun ta pārun
kar vōpkārun svay chay kriy

Don't torture your body
 with thirst and starvation.
 When the body is exhausted,
 take care of it.
 Cursed be your fasts
 and religious ceremonies.
 Be good to others—
 that is the real religious practice.

119

पवन पूरिथ युस अनि वगि
 तस ब्वना स्पर्शि न ब्वछि तु त्रेश
 ति यस करुन अन्तिह तगि
 संसारस सुय ज्ययी नेछ

pavan pūrith yusa ani vagi
tasbōna sparśi na bōchi ta tres
ti yas karun antih tagi
samsāras suy zēyī nech

Whoever controls the inhaled breath,
 hunger and thirst do not touch him.
 Whoever does this until the end
 is born fortunate in the world.

120

राजस बाँजि यम्य करतल त्याँजि
 स्वर्गस बाँजि छुय तफ तय दान
 सहजस बाँजि यम्य ग्वर-कथ पाँजि
 पाप-प्वण्य बाँजि छुय पनुनुय पान

rajas bāji yēmi kartal tyāji
svargas bāji chuy taph tay dān
sahazas bāji yēmi gvara-kath pāji
pāpa pōñi bāji chuy panunuy pān

Whoever is a skilled swordsman
 acquires a kingdom.

Whoever engages in penance and charity
 goes to heaven.

Whoever follows the guru's words
 gains self-knowledge.

He himself reaps the fruit of his good and bad
 deeds.

121

मिथ्या कपठ असथ त्रुवुम
 मनस कोरुम सुय वोपदीश
 ज्ञनस अंदर कीवल ज़ोनुम
 अनस ख्यनस कुस छुम दूश

mithyā kapaṭh asath trovum
manas korum suy vōpadīsh
zanas andar kīval zonum
anas khēnas kus chum dūsh

I renounced
 falsehood, deceit, and hypocrisy.
 I told my mind to follow this teaching.
 Only One I found in everyone—
 what is wrong with eating with anyone?

122

ज्ञानह॒ नाडिदल॒ मन॒ रं॑टिथ
 ज्ञं॑टिथ वं॑टिथ कु॒टिथ कली॑श
 ज्ञानह॒ अद् अस्त॒ रसा॑यन गं॒टिथ
 शिव॒ छुय॒ क्रूठ॒ त॒ ज्ञेन॒ वो॒प॑दीश

zānaha nāḍidal man raṭith
tsaṭith vaṭith kuṭith klīsh
zānaha ada asta rasāyan gaṭith
śiva chuy krūṭh ta tsen vōpadīsh

Had I known how to control
 the inner channels—
 how to cut them from desires
 and how to guide them
 to end my suffering—
 then I would have made the elixir.
 Śiva is difficult to attain, heed that advice.

123

कुस पुश त् क्वस् पुशाजी
 कम कुसुम लागिज्यस पूजे
 कमि गोड दिज्यस जलदानी
 कव सन् मन्थर् शंकर स्वात्म वुजे

kus puś ta kōssa puśāñī
kam kusum lāgizēs pūze
kami gōḍ dizēs zaldāni
kava sana manthr śaṅkara svātma vuze

Who is the male florist and the female?
 Which flowers should be offered for worship?
 Which water should be used for anointing?
 Which mantra will awaken the Śaṅkara within?

124

मन पुश तय यछ पुशाजी
 बावकि कुसुम लांगिज्यस पूजे
 शशिरस गोड दिज्यस जलदानी
 छवपि मंधर शंकर स्वात्म वुजे

man puś tay yatsh pushāñi
bāvaki kusum lāgizēs pūze
shashiras gōḍ dizēs zaldāni
tshōpi manthr śaṅkara svātma vuze

Mind is the male
 and desire the female florist.
 Offer the flowers of devotion in worship.
 Anoint with the eternal nectar
 dripping from the moon.
 Silent recitation will awaken
 the Śaṅkara within.

125

लूब मारुन सहज व्यञ्जारुन
 द्रोग जानुन कल्पन त्राव
 निशि छुय त् दूर मो गारुन
 शून्यस शून्याह मीलिथ गव

lūb mārūn sahaḥ vētsārun
drog zānun kalpan trāv
nishi chuy ta dūra mo gārūn
śūnyas śūnyāh mīlith gav

Abandon desires
 and meditate on the Self.
 Realization is hard to achieve.
 Stop daydreaming.
 That is near you,
 so don't search afar.
 Nothingness merges with nothingness.

126

योसय शेल पीठस त् पटस
 सोय शेल छय प्रथिवुन् दीश
 सोय शेल शूबवुनिस ग्रटस
 शिव छुय क्रूठ त ज्ञेन वोपदीश

yōsay shel pīṭhas ta paṭas
sōy shel chay prathivun dīsh
sōy shel shūbavanis graṭas
śiva chuy krūṭh ta tsen vōpadīsh

The stone on the pedestal
 and the pavement
 is the same stone that comes from the earth.
 The same stone adorns the grindstone.
 To attain Śiva is hard—
 heed my advice.

127

चर्मन चटिथ दितिथ पनि पानस
 त्युथ क्या व्वयोथ त फलिहि सोव
 मूडस वोपदीश गय रींजि दुमटस
 कनि दान्दस गोर आपरिथ रोव

tsarman tsatith ditith pani pānas
 tyuth kyā vōyoth ta phalihi sov
 mūḍas vōpadīsh gay rīnzi dumaṭas
 kani dāndas gor āparith rov

On removing the skin,
 you stretched it with pegs around yourself.
 What did you sow
 to have produced this fruit?
 Giving advice to a fool
 is like throwing pebbles at a dome
 or milking a brown bull
 after feeding it molasses.³⁰

³⁰ Lallā expresses in this verse the futility of teaching spiritual discipline to people who are immersed in the material world. Such people reduce themselves to their bodies (hide), stretching it and anchoring it in the material world through pegs of desire.

128

रव मत् थलि थलि तापितन
 तापितन वोत्तम वोत्तम दीश
 वरुन मत् लूक् गर अन्नितन
 शिव छुय कूठ तय ज्ञेन वोपदीश

rav mata thali thali täpitan
täpitan vōttam vōttam dīsh
varuṇa mata lūka gara ātsitan
śiva chuy krūth tay tsen vōpadīsh

Doesn't the sun shine everywhere
 instead of shining only on good places?
 Doesn't Varuṇa³¹
 enter every house?
 Attaining Śiva is difficult—
 heed this advice.³²

³¹ Varuṇa is an important Vedic God associated with rain, rivers, and oceans.

³² Lallā assures people of different castes, classes, and creeds that they are equally capable of acquiring self-knowledge since Śiva permeates both the inner and outer reality.

129

अथ मबा त्रावुन खर बा
 लूक हन्ज क्वंग वार ख्ययिय
 तति कुस बा दारीय थरबा
 यति नुनिस कर्तल प्ययिय

atha maba trāvun khar bā
lūka hanz kõng vār khēyiy
tati kus bā dārīy thar bā
yati nanis kartal pēyiy

Don't let your donkey loose.
 It will graze
 on other people's saffron fields.
 Who but you will have
 to bare your back there
 to take sword strikes
 when discovered.³³

³³ The "donkey" in the verse refers to the mind. If the mind is not under control, it will engage in misdeeds for which the owner must suffer punishment. This verse says metaphorically that one must bear the fruits of one's actions.

130

मूडो क्रय छय न दारुन त पारुन
 मूडो क्रय छय न रँछिनि काय
 मूडो क्रय छय न दिह सन्दारुन
 सहज व्यंज्जारुन छुय वोपदीश

mūḍo kriy chay na dārun ta pārun
mūḍo kriy chay na rachini kāy
mūḍo kriy chay na dih sandārun
sahaz vētsārun chuy vōpadīsh

Fool, the right action is not
 fasting and performing rituals.
 Fool, the right action is not
 protecting your body.
 Fool, the right action is not
 maintaining your body.
 Meditation on the Self is my advice.

131

ग्यान्मार्ग छय हाक् वार
 दिज्यस शम्-दम् क्रिय पोञ
 लामात्रक्र पोश प्रानि-क्रिय दार
 ख्यन् ख्यन् म्वन्निय वारय छैन्य

gyāna mārg chay hāka vār
dizēs sham dam kriyi poñ
lāmātsakra posh prāni kriyi dār
khēna khēna mōtsiy vāray chēn

The path of wisdom
 is like a kitchen garden.
 Nurture it with
 self-restraint, tranquility, and good deeds.
 Fruits of old deeds must be paid off
 like the animal offered to the goddess.
 Eating continuously from the garden
 will clear it of the fruits of past deeds.

132

लज्ज कासिय शीत न्यवारिय
 तृन जल करान आहार
 यि कम्य वोपदीश कोरुय हूट बटा
 अज्जीतन वटस सज्जीतन कठ द्युन आहार

laz kāsiy shīt nēvariṃ
trina zala karān āhār
yi kami vōpadīsh kōruy hūṭa baṭā
atsītan vaṭas satsītan kaṭh dyun āhār

It covers your body
 and protects you from cold.
 It lives on grass and water.
 Who gave you the advice, foolish Paṇḍit,
 to offer a living sheep
 to a lifeless stone?

133

हृथ क'रिथ राज्य फेरिना
 दिथ क'रिथ त्रप्ति न् मन
 लूब व्यना जीव मरिना
 जीवन्त मरि तय सुय छुय ग्यान

hēth karith rāji pherina
dith karith trāpti na man
lūba vēna zīv marina
zīvanta mari tai suy chuy gyān

Acquiring a kingdom
 will not make you content.
 Renouncing it
 will not satisfy your mind.
 Free from desires,
 you will not die.
 Self-knowledge is to be dead
 to worldly things while still alive.

134

मारुख मारबूथ काम-क्रूद-लूब
 नतु कान बरिथ मारनय पान
 मनय ख्यन दिख स्वव्यन्नार शम
 विशय तिहुंद क्याह-क्युथ दोर ज्ञान

*mārukh mārabūth kām krūd lūb
 nata kān barith mārnai pān
 manay khēn dikh svavētsāra sham
 viśay tihund kyāh kyuth dōr zān*

Kill your mortal enemies—
 lust, anger, and desire.

Otherwise they would kill you with their arrows.
 Calm them with self-restraint and good thoughts.
 Recognize their nature and their power.

135

मूड ज्ञानिथ पशिथ त् कोर
 कोल श्रुतवोन जडरूपि आस
 युस यी दपिय तस तीय बोल
 योहय तत्त्व व्यदिस छुह अब्यास

mūd zānith paśīth ta kor
kōl shrutavon zaḍa rūpi ās
yus yī dapiy tas tīya bol
yohay tattva vēdis chuh abyās

Act ignorant, even if you know.
 Act blind, even if you see.
 Act dumb, even if you hear.
 In short, act detached.
 Whatever people tell you,
 listen and agree.
 This practice will lead to knowledge.

136

वो॒थ रा॑न्या अ॒र्चुन॑ सखर
 अ॒थि अल॑ पल वखुर ह्यथ
 योद॑वनय ज्ञानख परम॒पद॑ अखयर
 हि॒शिय॑ खो॒श ख्वर॑ क्यथ ख्यथ

vōth rānyā artsun sakhar
athi alpal vakhur hēth
yodavanay zānakh paramapad akhēr
hishiy khōśa khōr kētha khēth

Arise, Lady! Prepare for worship
 with wine, meat, and a dainty choice of food.
 If you know the supreme state,
 breaking customs will make no difference.

137

दछिनिस ओबरस जायुन जान्ह
 समुद्रस जान्ह कडिथ अठ
 मन्दिस रूगियस वैद्युत जान्ह
 मूडस जानिम न् पृणित कथ

dachinis ōbras zāyun zānaha
samudras zānaha kaḍith aṭh
mandis rūgiyas vaidyut zānaha
mūdas zānim na priṇīt kath

I may know how to
 scatter southern clouds,
 dry up an ocean,
 or cure a chronically sick person,
 but I never knew how to convince a fool.

138

मारिथ पांछ बूथ तिम फलहंडी
 ज्ञीतन दान् तु वखुर ख्यथ
 तदै ज्ञानख परमपद चंडी
 हिशी खोश ख्वर कोति न् ख्यथ

mārith pāñtsh būth tim phalhandī
tsītana dāna ta vakhur khēth
taday zānakh paramapad tsaṇḍī
hishi khōśa khōr koti na khēth

Kill the five elements of experience³⁴
 on a diet of meditation
 and realize the supreme state—
 breaking customs
 makes no difference.

³⁴ The five elements of experience (*pañca-mahābhūtas*) of the physical world are solidity, aeriality, vacuity, liquidity, and formativity.

139

कन्द्यो करख कन्दि कन्दे
 कन्द्यो करख कन्दि विलास
 बूगय मीठि दितिथ यथ कन्दे
 अथ कन्दि रोजि सूर न तु सास

kandyo karakh kandi kande
kandyo karakh kandi vilās
būgay mīthi ditith yath kande
ath kandi rozi sūr na ta sās

Hey, you, preoccupied with your body.
 Hey, you, busy adorning your body
 and using it for sweet pleasures—
 not even dust and ashes will remain of this body.

140

स्वमन् गारुन मंज यथ कन्दे
 यथ कन्दि दपान स्वरूप नाव
 लूब मूह त्रलिय शूब यियि कन्दे
 यथि कन्दि तीज तय सोर प्रकाश

*svamana gārun manz yath kande
 yath kandi dapān svarūp nāv
 lūb mūh tsaliy shūb yiyi kande
 yathi kandi tīz tay sor prakāśa*

Seek the Self in the body.
 This body is known as the abode of the Self.
 Forsaking greed and attachment
 will brighten the body.
 The body will shine like the sun.

141

च्यथ अमरपथि थाविजि
 ति त्राविथ लगिय जूरे
 तति त्र नो शीक्यजि संदरजि
 द्वदशुर त क्वछ नो मूरे

tsēth amarapathi thāvizi
ti trāvith lagiy zūre
tati tsa no śikizi sandārizi
dvadashur ta kōcha no mūre

Focus your attention on the immortal path.
 If the mind strays from the path,
 it will be lost.
 Don't be afraid there—
 be calm.
 A suckling baby is quiet in the lap.

142

ज्ञामर छत्र रथ सिंहासन
 ह्लाद नाटिरस तूल-परयाँख
 क्याह मानिथ यंति स्थिर आसवुन
 कव ज्ञन कासिय मरुन्य शांख

tsāmar chathr ratha simhāsan
hlād nāṭiras tūla paryāṅkh
kyāh mānith yēti sthir āsavun
kavzana kāsiy maranañi shāṅkh

A fly-whisk, a sunshade,
 a chariot, and a throne.
 Merry making, pleasures of theater,
 or a soft bed—
 which of these will endure here?
 How can they relieve you
 of the fear of death?

143

राजू हंस आसिथ सपदुख कोलय
 कुस्ताम ज़ोलुय क्याहताम ह्यथ
 ग्रट गव बंद तय ग्रटन ह्योत गोलुय
 ग्रटवोल ज़ोलुय फल फोल ह्यथ

rāza hams āsith sapadukh kōlay
kustām tsoluy kyāhtām hēth
grāṭa gav band tay grāṭan hyot gōluy
grāṭavol tsoluy phal phol hēth

Even though a royal swan,
 you have become mute.
 Someone has run away with something.
 As soon as the mill stopped,
 the grain channel got choked.
 The miller ran away with the grain.³⁵

³⁵ The word *hamsa* refers to the basic meditation in the Śaiva tradition involving breath control, and, literally, it refers to the bird "swan," often associated with beauty. This verse is a metaphor for spiritual experience.

144

असि प्वन्दि ज्वसि जामि
 न्यथय स्नान करि तीर्थन
 वहुर्य वाहरस नोनुय आसि
 निशि छुय त् परज्ञानतन

asi pōndi zvasi zāmi
nēthay snān kari tīrthan
vahari vāharas nōnuy āsi
nishi chuy ta parzāntan

Laughing, sneezing, coughing, and yawning,
 bathing daily at holy places,
 revealed throughout the year—
 That is near you,
 so recognize it.

145

शिव छुय जाव्युल जाल वहराविथ
 क्रंजन मंज छुय तरिथ क्यथ
 जिंद नय वुछहन अद् कति मरिथ
 पान मंज पान कड व्यचारिथ क्यथ

śiva chuy zāvyul zāl vahaṛävith
kranzan manz chuy tarith kyath
zinda nay vuchahan ada kati marith
pāna manz pān kad vētsārith kyath

Śiva is like a fine net spread everywhere,
 subtly permeating the physical world.
 If you don't see him while alive,
 how can you do so when dead?
 Through self-introspection,
 remove the self from within yourself.

146

रंगस मंज छुय ब्योन ब्योन लबुन
 सौरुय ज्ञालख बरख स्वख
 ज्ञख रंश त् वैर गालख
 अद् डेशख शिव सुंद म्वख

raṅgas manz chuy byōn byōn labun
soruy tsālakh barakh svakh
tsakh raśa ta vair gālakh
ada ḍeshakh śiva sund mökh

The world is full of differences.
 If you are tolerant,
 you will be happy.
 If you renounce anger, hate, and animosity,
 you will see Śiva's face.

Appendix



Lallā and the Kashmīrī Śaiva Tradition

Lallā's verses tell the story of her spiritual journey as a Śaiva mystic. Her interest in the Kashmīrī Śaiva practice was deepened due to her disenchantment with the conditions of her material existence. Siddha Śrīkaṇṭha initiates her into Śaiva yoga and she strives to establish her own inner connection with the tradition based on her experience. As she advances in her practice, she is said to have surpassed even her teacher.

For a context for understanding Lallā's verses, I provide here a brief overview of the Kashmīrī Śaiva tradition.¹ Kashmīrī Śaivites view the ultimate reality as pure consciousness. Various terms, vibration (*spanda*), Self-awareness (*vimarśa*), and power (*bala*) are used to describe the activity of the universal consciousness, which is pure light (*prakāśa*), independent and unconditioned. The *prakāśa-vimarśamaya* nature of the universal consciousness makes it creative, dynamic, and active as it manifests itself in the diversity of the world.

The expansion of the universal consciousness results in the unfolding (*unmeṣa*) of the phenomenal world, and its contraction or infolding (*nimeṣa*) leads to the withdrawal of diversity into the unity of its original state. The metaphor of ocean and waves is used to describe the activity of the

¹ Kashmīrī Śaiva literature can be divided into three categories: a. *Āgama Śāstra* which includes among others tantras like the *Mālanīvijaya*, *Svacchanda*, *Vijñānabhairava*, *Mṛgendra*, *Rudryāmala*, *Netra*, and the *Śiva Sūtra* with its various commentaries b. *Spanda Śāstra* includes the *Spandakārikā* with various commentaries c. *Pratyabhijñā śāstra* includes Somānanda's *Śivadṛṣṭi*, Utpaladevā's *Īśvarapratyabhijñā*, Kshemarāja's *Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya*, and Abhinavagupta's *Tantrāloka* and *Tantrasāra* (Chatterji 128-169).

universal consciousness—the ocean symbolizes the universal or Śiva consciousness and the waves the diversity of the phenomenal reality. Just as waves emerge from the vastness of the ocean, so it is with the individual consciousness emerging from the Śiva consciousness, which is the essential ground of both the manifest and the unmanifest reality.

The activity of consciousness gives rise to three different states: deep sleep, dreaming, and waking. Deep sleep represents the state of unity in which the universal and the individual consciousness coincide. The awareness of this unity in deep sleep is merely unconscious, but if conscious awareness of this unity exists, then it is called the “fourth state” which is achieved through introspective contemplation. The dream state represents the sphere of inner speech, populated by thoughts and images that do not arise from direct interaction with the outer world as in the waking state. The dream state is thus unique to each individual as it is a part of his or her subjective awareness. In the waking state, as opposed to the dream state, the objective sphere predominates and it is characterized by a sharp distinction between the subject and the world of objects familiar to all.

Since the universal consciousness is the substratum of the diverse phenomenal world, starting from humans at the top of the evolutionary ladder down to the simplest non-living matter, liberation lies in realizing one’s own nature (*svasvabhāva*), which is pure consciousness.

The *Spandakārikā*,² a poetic and semi-philosophical text, summarizes the teachings contained in the *Śiva Sūtra*. Utpaladeva’s *Īśvarapratyabhijñā*, on the other hand, is a

² The *Spandakārikā* consist of fifty-three verses. Its authorship is disputed. Some claim that this text was composed by Vasugupta or revealed to him, while others insist that it is the work of his student Kallaṭa.

systematization of *pratyabhijñā* philosophy.³ According to the *pratyabhijñā* philosophy the universal consciousness is the source of creation, persistence, and withdrawal of the universe. Comparing the *pratyabhijñā* and *spanda* perspectives, Dyczkowski writes "while the *Pratyabhijñā* stresses transcendence without ignoring or minimizing immanence, *Spanda* stresses immanence grounded in transcendence" (*The Stanzas* 193). This distinction is important to remember as we explore Lallā's thought since she shows a leaning toward the *pratyabhijñā* perspective and seems to emphasize transcendence, but unlike it, ignores the significance of immanence. This attitude is also reflected in her austere lifestyle and her approach to her bodily needs. The body is only important as long as it serves as a means to bring her the experience of transcendence.

The *Spandakārikā* describe three types of impurities (*āṇavamala*, *māyīyamala*, and *karmamala*), which lead to limited vision and thus prevent the individual from realizing her own nature. The *āṇavamala* is the metaphysical ignorance that makes the individual experience herself as limited. The *māyīyamala* makes the limited individual forget her essential nature. The *karmamala* leads to the performance of both good and bad deeds that leave impressions, which further bind the individual to the material world. The

³ The first philosophic treatise on Kashmīr Śaivism, *Śivadr̥ṣṭi*, was composed by Somānanda toward the end of the eighth century. His disciple Utpaladeva wrote *Īśvarapratyabhijñā*, the source text for *pratyabhijñā* philosophy that was developed in Kashmīr between the middle of the 9th and the 11th centuries. Both Abhinavagupta (10th century) and Kṣemarāja (11th century) wrote commentaries on *Īśvarapratyabhijñā*. Kashmīrī Śaiva philosophy reached its pinnacle in the hands of Abhinavagupta who brought about a syncretism of different Śaiva schools in his voluminous *Tantrāloka*, a summarization of the *Tantrāloka* in *Tantrasāra*, a commentary on the *Parātrīśikā* and several other works. His work developed Trika Śaivism into an all encompassing system, which is considered to be synonymous with Kashmīrī Śaivism.

unenlightened remain unaware of their own nature, and hence, are bound by the limited vision of the empirical consciousness that confines them to the world of thoughts and ideas related to the objects of the world of senses.

The three powers associated with Śiva are: action (*kriyāśakti*), will (*icchāśakti*), and knowledge (*jñānaśakti*). The power to act (*kriyāśakti*) thus lies in the *spandāśakti* of Śiva, which is one's own essential nature. The *Śiva Sūtras* elaborate on the means of liberation and divide them into three categories: *śāmbhavopāya*, *śāktopāya*, and *āṇavopāya*. In the *śāmbhavopāya* the experience of self-realization occurs as a sudden flash of intuition revealing one's own nature as the source of both the outer world of diversity and the inner world of thoughts and speech. The *śāktopāya*, also called *jñānayoga*, involves focused examination of the nature of self. It is comprised of two types of practices—contemplation on the five-fold activity of Śiva (creation, persistence, destruction, concealment, and grace) and purification of one's thought constructs. By watching the rise and fall of thoughts in a state of passive alertness, the individual experiences one's grounding in the universal consciousness. Finally, the *āṇavopāya* involves focusing attention on one's body, breath, ritual, mantra, and so on. Eventually, all these practices lead to the realization that phenomenal reality emerges out of the ceaseless activity of the universal consciousness.

Lallā's approach to her practice can be classified under the *āṇavopāya*. She begins as a limited individual (*aṇu*) deeply attached to sense objects. In this state, she strongly identifies with her ego-consciousness. Some of Lallā's verses deal with the early stages of her practice when she feels overwhelmed by the conditions of her material existence. She searches for means to overcome her limited vision that binds her to the material reality. According to the *Śiva Sūtras* the individual consciousness is imprisoned in the world created out of thought constructs. The self gets attached to

these constructs and on becoming attached, it is affected by states of pleasure and pain that leave behind impressions, thus further binding the self to the world that appears divided and separate. In the early stages of her quest, Lallā strives for detachment and equanimity in the face of ridicule she suffers from members of her community as she sets out on her own path. Thus, she says:

Both good and bad, I must endure.
 My ears don't hear,
 and my eyes don't see.
 When the inner Self
 awakens in my heart,
 the lamp will shine
 even in the midst of a tornado. (V 9)

The first step toward self-knowledge, then, involves getting rid of the ego consciousness or I-ness and opening up to the Śiva consciousness. Also, focusing on the transitoriness of material things can be used as an aid to turning one's attention away from sense objects. Whereas in the *bhakti* tradition external deity and objects of worship are used to gain spiritual experience, in the Śaiva tradition external objects of worship are replaced by sustained contemplation on the Self. Since the attention constantly slips out of five sense organs, extreme will power must be cultivated to proceed with the practice. Lallā says:

What will I do
 with the five, the ten, and the eleven?
 They have all emptied out the cauldron.
 If all had come together
 and pulled the rope,
 the eleven would not have lost the cow. (V 16)

The "five" in the above verse are the five principles (*pañca-mahābhūtas*) of experience of the physical world (solidity, aeriality, vacuity, liquidity, and formativity), the "ten" are the five organs of sense perception (*jñānendriyas*)

and the five of action (karmendriyas) and the “eleven” refer to these ten with the mind (manas) arising from ego consciousness (ahaṃkāra). Lallā comments here about the necessity of emptying of the body, depicted as a cauldron, as sense organs, along with organs of action, as well as the mind, continually disperse one’s attention. Consequently, the experience of Śiva consciousness, represented by the “cow,” is lost. If all are brought under control, self-knowledge can be achieved.

Many of Lallā’s verses deal specifically with the use of breathing exercises to achieve a state of inner focus when the activities of the body, mind and senses are brought to rest. Controlling the mind and the senses is done through the mastery of breathing. A few of Lallā’s verses deal with the actual practice in the Kashmīrī Śaiva tradition that involves controlling the prāṇasakti or vital breath:

After wandering in ten directions,
I found the true path.
Through breath control,
I penetrated the void—
Śiva I saw permeating all.
Shutting the six and the three,
I found Śiva the root cause of all. (V 33)

This method of meditation involves focusing within, watching the inhalation (apāna) and exhalation (prāṇa) which is combined with the cessation of all thoughts. The “six” in this verse refer to the five organs of senses and the mind and the “three” refer to three body openings—all these are brought to rest through introspection. The Vijñāna-bhairava gives innumerable techniques for this purpose. And one of them is haṃsah, which involves meditation on the middle space between the in-breath and out-breath. Fixing one’s attention on the space between two thoughts is yet another extension of this practice. Instead of moving from thought to thought, the practitioner focuses on the space between two thoughts to experience the ground

from which all thoughts arise. Through constant absorption in *hamsah*, the Self or Śiva is experienced as the essential nature of both the outer world of diversity and the inner world of the contemplating self.

Recite *hamsa* with every breath.

Renounce the self
and meditate on the Self.

Whoever renounces the self,
finds the Self.

Negating the I-ness is my advice. (V 97)

Lallā also refers to yet another practice that deals with one's absorption in the sound of Om.⁴ Lillian Silburn writes that Lallā's references to Om can actually be traced to a practice given in the *Svacchandatantra*, which describes the ascent of the vital breath through the psychic centers of the body while Om is sounded. The three syllables of the sounding of Om, A, U, and M, are associated with psychic centers located in the heart, throat, and the vault of the palate respectively.⁵ Regarding this practice, Lallā says:

While tracing the history of Om in India, Mark Dyczkowski writes that in Vedic times Om was recited in the beginning of the Vedic hymns and regarded as the male seed that fertilized the female hymn. In Upaniṣidic times, the three syllables of the sound Om, AUM, came to symbolize three states of consciousness—waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. In the tantric literature, this symbolism is extended even further in that the resonance at the end of the sounded AUM itself is seen to incorporate subtler levels of awareness which are divided into different phases: the half moon (*ardhacandra*), the point (*bindu*), the limit (*nirodhikā*), the sound (*nāda*), the unstruck sound (*nādānta*), the energy (*śakti*), the pervasive (*vyāpinī*), the equal one (*samāna*) and the transmental (*unmanā*) (*The Stanzas* 252).

⁵ The awakening of *kuṇḍalinī* and experiencing its ascent up the spine to the *sahasrāra* constitutes the fundamental practice of Kashmirī Śaivism. See Silburn.

Doors and windows of my body I closed.
 The prāna-thief I caught
 and brought under control.
 I tied it inside the chamber of my heart.
 I whipped it with the syllable Om. (V 27)

The three syllables AUM are also associated with three states of consciousness—waking, dreaming, and deep sleep and the three deities, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Rudra (a form of Śiva). Lallā's verses do not give actual techniques, but rather use metaphorical language to convey her own experiences of higher states of awareness, which cannot be contained in the reality assigned to the deities Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva—the creator, the preserver and destroyer of the universe, according to Hindu mythological literature. Thus, Lallā says:

Śiva is the horse,
 Keśava is the saddle
 and Brahmā is on the stirrups.
 A yogi through yogic practice
 recognizes the One
 riding the horse. (V 56)

The unstruck sound of Om,
 all permeating,
 whose abode is void,
 without name,
 colour, caste or form.
 Self-introspection reveals
 the unsounded resonance.
 That is the deity riding the horse. (V 57)

Lallā's mastery of various breathing practices is indicated by the legend that describes her teacher's amazement at the intensity of her austerity during the forty-day fast of *candrāvana*. On the full moon day, she enters a clean room, stands in an earthen pot and covers her head with another such pot. As the moon wanes, her body diminishes in size, until on the fifteenth day the two pots, the top and the bottom,

join each other. Śrīkaṇṭha, her teacher, lifts the lid and sees trembling quicksilver inside. As the moon waxes, Lallā's body begins to increase in size until on the full-moon day she regains her old size. He is impressed by her performance and says that the disciple has overtaken the teacher (*gav tsāth gvaras kha'sith*) (Koul 1921, 312).

The above legend symbolically represents the essence of Kāshmirī Śaiva teachings. The recurrent cosmic cycles, the rising and setting of the sun and the moon, are self-perpetuating processes that are integrally related to the individual perception of these processes. The rising and falling of cosmic cycles as well as individual moments of cognition and perception represent the expansion (*unmeṣa*) and contraction (*nimeṣa*) of consciousness. The five-fold functions of Śiva (creativity, persistence, withdrawal, grace, and obscuration) are repeated in a limited way at the individual level as one engages in activities of cognition and perception. On the individual level, however, the powers of universal consciousness become a means of bondage. As Kāshmirī Śaiva texts point out, it is the obscuration power of Śiva that leads to the diversity of the world. Those who get entangled in this diversity without discovering its grounding in universal consciousness remain ignorant about the continuity between the subjective reality of the inner world and the objective reality of the outer world.

Whereas the first three functions of Śiva, creativity, persistence, and withdrawal, occur at both cosmic and individual level, the last two, grace and obscuration, are intimately tied to the individual striving to realize one's own nature (*svasvabhāva*). On the individual level, the moment of creation arises out of mental perceptions as one's attention is focused on inner objects of thought or external objects of perception. The enjoyment of the object of attention is the moment of persistence. And as the objective sphere is absorbed in pure consciousness and it lies there as if in a potential form, it is the moment of withdrawal. The objects of mental perception and cognition, if not withdrawn

completely into consciousness, leave behind impressions, resulting in concealment or obscuration of the true nature of reality. In this state, the objective reality is experienced as separate and disconnected from oneself. The moment of grace (*anugraha*) is marked by the realization that underlying both the subjective and the objective sphere is the universal consciousness that is one's own nature.

In the above legend, the transformation of Lallā's body into a ball of vibrating quicksilver symbolically represents her introspective state as she experiences expansion of her consciousness. Lallā's body does not dissolve into the blankness of nothingness, but is turned into vibrant quicksilver, a metaphor for the higher state of consciousness, also called the fourth state. The image presents the immanence and transcendence in tension, leading to the experience of the third space, which goes beyond the binary dualism. In this state, the distinction between the subject and the object disappears and the empirical consciousness transcends the objective reality.

Transgressing the distinctions between the inside and outside or the subject and object leads to the opening up of an entirely new space that refuses to be contained in any dualistic conceptual frameworks. The most profound of Lallā's verses, then, try to represent just such an experience which is unrepresentable since it goes beyond all thought constructs, dualities, names and attributes.

Speech or mind and
manifest or transcendent
have no existence there.
Yogic silence has no place there.
Śiva and Śakti don't live there.
Seek whatever is left—
that is my advice. (V 95)

Even as Lallā's verses make references to Śiva as a male deity, the underlying current of her experiences is best represented by those verses that portray Śiva as the

transcendental reality which is beyond any anthropomorphic representation, a reality that goes beyond subject-object duality since it is the essential ground of both.

The difficult task that Lallā faces is how to represent this reality using language that always objectifies what it represents. Also, any attempt to describe the metaphysical reality that exists outside the linguistic and epistemological structures of a culture is already influenced by the thought structures and language of the culture that attempts to describe it. Finally, she describes this state by simply saying what it is not. Lallā speaks about this final state in terms of nothingness coming in touch with nothingness.

Neither you nor I
and neither meditation
nor the object of meditation exist.
The All-doer forgets Himself.
The blind find this meaningless.
The wise become one
with this supreme state. (V 61)

In yet another formulation of this concept, Lallā describes the sun as illuminating the world of objects. The setting of the sun, then, represents an introspective state when the individual withdraws attention from the objective sphere and rests in the subjective sphere. This state is compared to the shining of the moon. As the moon vanishes or as the practitioner goes beyond the subjective sphere, he experiences *śūnya* or nothingness.

The sun sets,
the moon shines.
The moon vanishes,
consciousness remains.
Consciousness disappears,
nothingness remains—
the physical, spiritual, and metaphysical
merge into nothingness. (V 31)

The sun and the moon in this verse refer to the practice that involves the control of vital breath and its ascent through the psychic centers. The setting of the sun and the moon represents two currents, *prāṇa* (*sūrya* or sun) and *apāna* (*candra* or moon) that join in the middle channel (*suṣumnā*), as the vital breath ascends upwards and develops into the concentrated point and on to the half moon, then breaking through the limit (*nīrodhikā*), and on to yet subtler levels of awareness where the universal subjectivity predominates. In the *Spandakārikās*, similar verses appear:

Once entered that state which (the yogi) takes as his support and firmly resolves that: 'I will surely do whatever He [Śiva] says,' both the sun and moon set, following the ascending way, into the channel of *suṣumnā*, once abandoned the sphere of the universe ... Then in that great sky, when the sun and moon dissolve away, the dull minded (yogi is cast down) into a state like that of deep sleep. The awakened however remains lucid [V 23, 24, 25]. (*The Stanzas* xvi)

As the individual reaches higher states of awareness, Lallā says, it is possible to let go of this subjective sphere and experience a state when all dualities are transcended so that the physical, spiritual, and the metaphysical all come together in the experience of the new state.

Lallā also occasionally describes the process of realizing the highest state in terms of crossing six forests or six paths and seizing the seventh. The "six paths" refers to six cakras or energy centers along the spine— *mūlādhāra*, *svādhiṣṭhāna*, *maṇipura*, *anāhata*, *viśuddhā*, *ājñā*. The orb of the moon is the seventh chakra or *brahmarandhra*. The references once again are to the practices mentioned above and the ultimate goal is always to realize the state of nothingness or non-being, which Lallā refers to as "the abode of light."

After traversing six forests,
I awakened the orb of the moon.

By controlling my breath,
 I gave up attachment to worldly things.
 I roasted my heart
 in the fire of love—
 I found Śaṅkara that way. (V 67)

I became absorbed in the sacred syllable Oṃ.
 I burned myself like coal.
 Leaving behind six paths,
 I seized the seventh—
 and then, I, Lallā, reached the abode of light. (V 28)

The *Svacchandatantra* discusses the development of the syllable Oṃ in terms of crossing seven voids, the first six of which are unstable because of vibration and hence, must be transcended in order to arrive at the seventh which, free of all states, is the highest void and represents "non-being." Thus, "Non-being is beyond contemplation, and its domain is beyond the universe; free of the mind, intellect and the rest, it is devoid of reason and doctrine. It is the imperishable Lord, beyond perception and the other means of knowledge, beyond all reason and authority, free of bondage and Mantra, omniscient, omnipresent, tranquil, pure, and free of limitations."⁶ Lallā refers to the experience of "non-being" (*abhāva*) as nothingness (*śūnya*) in her verses not in negative or nihilistic terms, but more to represent a space that cannot be contained in any dualistic categories. Lallā's verses reflect her quest for transcendence. Her choice of images and metaphors, therefore, more often than not point toward creating disenchantment with worldly things. Her journey is a one-way journey to cross the river of life to reach the other shore. Even though Lallā embodies the state of detachment from the world and hence, possesses the ability to experience it in its fullness, yet there is a deliberate attempt on her part to stay locked out of any aesthetic experience of

⁶ From the *Svacchandabhairavatantra*. Quoted in *The Stanzas* 211.

the world. The aesthetic delight that Abhinavagupta⁷ writes about in his work on poetry and drama is not available to Lallā as she has turned away from the world. Her verses are the only means through which she can manifest her joy and creativity.

I did not pause for the right moment.
 I did not trust anything.
 The wine I, Lallā, drank
 was my own verses.
 I caught the inner darkness,
 gathered it
 and tore it into shreds. (V 93)

Her most profound verses then reflect her desire to lose herself in mystical experience rather than to use it as the ground to lead a more fulfilling material existence. Thus, she says,

Impurities of my mind
 were wiped away as from a mirror,
 and I attained self-knowledge.
 I saw Him near me—
 He is everything,
 and I am nothing. (V 68)

⁷ Abhinavagupta (10th century AD), a philosopher, literary critic, and a great Shaivite teacher wrote extensively on the role of poetry and drama to experience the bliss of the Self during moments of intense emotional experiences when thought processes come to a complete halt. Abhinava wrote two influential commentaries, the *Dhvanyālokalocana* on the *Dhvanyāloka* of Ānandavardhana (9th century literary critic and poet), and the *Abhinavabhāratī* which explicates the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, a work on dramaturgy by Bharata (500 AD). In the *Abhinavabhāratī* while eulogizing poets, Abhinavagupta compares the poet to the creator itself, because "the poet is endowed with a power to create wondrous and unheard of things. This power arises from the grace of *Parā Vāk* ("Highest Speech") which is just another name for poetic imagination (*pratibhā*) which has its seat in the poet's own heart, and which is eternally in creative motion (*udita*)" (quoted in Masson 13).

Lallā justifies her renunciation of the world by describing it as an illusion, which is surprising considering the fact that she is a Śaiva practitioner. Kashmīrī Śaivites explicitly reject the position taken by nondualist Vedāntins that the world is an illusion or *māyā*. Nondualist Vedāntins believe that there is only one reality, which is transcendental and inactive Brahman. Once ignorance is removed, the world appears as what it actually is—Brahman. For example, in darkness it is easy to mistake a rope for a snake, but once light shines on the rope, the illusion is dispelled. Kashmīrī Śaivites, on the other hand, believe all manifest reality is real because it represents the unfolding of consciousness. The unfolding gives rise to diversity and infolding to withdrawal into the unity where the universe is held in a potential form. There are not two different moments or two different orders of reality here, but one moment with two aspects where one has the other implicit in it. Through the cultivation of the self as the Self, one realizes that the universal consciousness constitutes the ground of the three states of consciousness, deep sleep, dreaming, and waking, even as it abides in the fourth that transcends the three states. Śiva and Śakti, transcendence and immanence, represent two aspects of the same reality held together in a delicate balance, as each separately is only an incomplete description of reality.

Lallā comments upon the dynamism between Śiva and Śakti in terms of the interplay between the self (the finite consciousness) and Śiva or the Self (the universal consciousness). The realization of the Self within oneself, *ātmavyāpti*, and the realization of the Self as the substratum of the outside world, *śivavyāpti*, is the ultimate goal of her practice. The enlightened perspective reveals to her that the empirical and the universal, as well as the manifest and the unmanifest, are interwoven. The manifest world arises out of the womb of the unmanifest like waves arise from the ocean.

The efficacy of the notion of unity in duality or on a broader scale unity in multiplicity is closely related to what

perspective is used to describe the two aspects of reality that are interwoven. The traditional interpretation of Śaivism has been to regard liberation as the realization of an eternal state that is changeless and timeless Absolute—the state of Śiva consciousness. The aim of liberation, then, is to attain to this state in order to escape from the ravages of time. For example, the commentators of the *spanda* doctrine admit that the ultimate consciousness and its vibration belong to one moment rather than two different moments of reality, even as they insist that ultimately Śiva is the eternal agent of the cosmic process as well as individual experience. Dyczkowski, however, writes that the original doctrine of *spanda* did not make finer distinctions in its description of the ultimate reality. In the *Spandakārikās*, in fact, there is no contradiction seen in describing Śiva as both transcendent and immanent in all states of consciousness and yet, whose highest state of awareness transcends all states. According to the *Spandakārikās*, Śiva

is transcendently immanent, with the stress being on His immanence as the experiencing subject (*bhoktṛ*) who, divested of all egoity, is not the individual soul (*puruṣa*) nor the individual perceiver (*grāhaka*) but his own personal fundamental state (*svasthiti*) or being (*svasvabhāva*). Engaged in the act of perception, he is also the pure agency (*kartṛtā*) which, although omniscient and omnipotent, is not centered on individual objects of perception or products of action, but is the universal underlying ground (*adhiṣṭhātṛ*) and activity (*sāmānyaspanda*)....Self realization is the astonishing insight into one's own fundamental state of being as Śiva in both domains of subjectivity and objectivity. (Dyczkowski *The Stanzas* 186)

The original *spanda* doctrine thus represents the middle ground between the Śiva-oriented *pratyabhijñā* philosophy and the Śakti-oriented *krama* system of Kāśmīrī Śaivism. The most empowering interpretation of Śaivism would be

to define liberation in terms of a process where self-realization is neither to be lost in the transcendent and restful Śiva nor to find oneself limited to the domain of Śakti.

Perhaps we can understand this concept better if we refer to recent discoveries in quantum mechanics, which cannot be explained on the basis of categories of human understanding and normal sense perceptions. At the quantum level the subatomic particles appear as both waves and particles. If instruments were used to describe their position, they would register as particles, and if their momentum was measured, they would appear as waves. Each by itself is thus an incomplete description of the subatomic reality. Both the wave and particle descriptions are needed to give the complete picture. More fundamentally, reality is potential. By exercising awareness in different ways, the many possibilities are reduced to specific actuality.

The evolution of phenomenal reality is contingent on the ground-stuff of consciousness. The well-known quantum physicist David Bohm proposes a theory of reality based on his synthesis of insights into quantum reality with Eastern philosophical ideas. Bohm theorizes that there is an implicate order enfolded in the entire universe, and at that level everything is interconnected and a part of the whole. Becoming and not being is the basis of reality. A Śaivite would say reality is the play of consciousness, and a physicist metaphysician might say reality is process—a flow of processes that are novel, creative, and evolving. Everything is part of the flux of this everchanging reality.

Both the Self and the self are intricately intertwined. No eternity exists apart from temporal existence—one is enfolded in the other and does not exist apart from the other. Śiva and Śakti are two aspects of the same indeterminate reality so that one can say that reality is both Śiva and Śakti. "The motion of absolute consciousness is a creative movement, a transition from the uncreated state of Being to the created state of Becoming. In this sense Being is in a state of perpetual Becoming ...it constantly phenomenalises

into finite expression" (Dyczkowski 1987, 77).

Kashmīrī Śaivites describe the Self or Śiva as a painter who paints on the screen of his own consciousness or as an artist who brings forth the world for his own delight. The world is the result of the tāṇḍava dance of Śiva through which he expresses his pure joy and freedom. Since Śiva or the Self underlies both the self and the world, the ultimate aim of the individual is to become aware of one's true nature (*svasvabhāva*). To experience the world as the aesthetic expression of Śiva is compared in the Śaiva texts to the experience of an artwork. The highest art is not a realistic representation of the external world, but the expression of joy and freedom of the Self. Abhinavagupta says that for a reader or a spectator of an artistic work, "the enjoyment of an aesthetic experience consists of a transcendental wonder (*alaukikacamatkāra*) and is decidedly (*eva*) different from ordinary (*laukika*) knowledge such as (is produced) by memory and inference."⁸ The poet uses creative imagination (*pratibhā*) to express the greatest freedom and joy of creation. Great poetry invokes in the reader feelings of awe and wonder, filling him with amazement (*camatkāra*). During such an experience the distance between the subject and object disappears. Time and space dissolve. The transcendence of the empirical ego leads to self-forgetfulness and total immersion in the moment.⁹ Just as it is in the experience of art and poetry, so it can be in the experience

⁸ Abhinavagupta in the *Abhinavabhāratī*. Quoted in Masson 48.

⁹ In *Towards a Psychology of Being*, Abraham Maslow uses similar terminology to describe peak experiences, which are intense experience of creative, mystical, philosophical, and emotional nature. Peak experiences are the experiences of highest happiness and fulfillment. In this state perception transcends the ego and one experiences wonder, amazement, humility and even reverence. Maslow's description of peak experiences very well illustrates the Śaiva belief that intense experience of emotions, mystical or creative in nature, lead to the transcendence of the empirical ego and the experience of our Śiva nature.

of the world as the creative play of consciousness.

The need to play is intrinsic to reality—the play here means nature's tendency to create meaningful order out of diverse phenomena marked by creativity and novelty. Liberation, then, is the realization that the true nature of reality is becoming. The description of reality as the *tāṇḍava* dance of Śiva illustrates the process of becoming and hints at its creative and aesthetic elements. The *Śiva Sūtras* say: "The Self is the actor or the dancer (*nartaka ātmā*)" (*Aphorisms* 105). A good actor is sensitive to the emotive states (*rasa*) of the play and identifies completely with the part she plays and yet in between the scenes, she reverts back to her own self and rejoices in the play of creation. Similarly, the Self within the self acts out its world drama through the activity of the senses, taking delight in its unfolding in the diversity of the manifest reality. According to the *Spandakārikās* "the realization of the liberated condition is the achievement of a state of pure enjoying subjectivity (*bhoktrtā*), through which perfect mastery of every power is acquired...The liberated yogi thus conforms to Śiva's state which, beyond the opposites of subject and object, pleasure and pain, is the subject who enjoys the cosmic sport of the cycle of His universal manifestation" (Dyczkowski, *The Stanzas* 186).

To say that Lallā actually read these texts would be to plunge into ahistoricism and deny her the specificity of the historical moment she occupies. Her worldview is very much shaped by the ideology of the medieval period. In spite of remarkable insights into the nature of reality she attains through her Śaivite practice, she can only experience these insights in a disembodied fashion, without integrating them into her lived reality. This in fact limits her potential to lead a fulfilling life at the physical level, even as she achieves an advanced state of awareness at the spiritual level.

In another work, *To the Other Shore: Lalla's Life and Poetry*, I argue that Lallā's asceticism was due to her location as a woman practitioner within the Kashmīrī Śaiva tradition. This location placed her spiritual attainment in a

contradictory position to the traditional role of a woman and a wife in which self-effacement and subservience were promoted rather than self-mastery. Lallā's verses repeatedly point to the futility of observing religious practices that include asceticism and renunciation. In one of her verses, she says that even householders can achieve self-realization if they work hard at it. Her own life, however, contradicts the message in her teachings. Even as at one level, there is a need to transcend dualism, at another level her words are marked by the dualism of mind and body.

To bring out the relevance of Lallā's poetry for contemporary society, it is important to emphasize that the Kāśmīrī Śaivism which permeates her verses does not promote renunciation of the world. The *Spandakārikās* describe the relationship of the Self and the world as that between the mirror and its reflection. The reflection is not something separate from the mirror, just as the created world is not separate from the Self. However, unlike the reflection, which is of an object outside the mirror, there is nothing outside the consciousness that gets reflected. This is an important distinction, which illustrates that the relationship between the consciousness and the empirical world is not based on positing the world as the other, outside of itself, and thereby assigning it a different order of reality. Instead, the empirical world exists within the mirror of consciousness and hence, the two are integrally related. The world is not a negative image of the Self. In order to experience the Self, one need not negate the world since it is an expression of the Self. Once the enlightened perspective is achieved, the world can be enjoyed as the creative manifestation of the universal consciousness.

In Lallā's verses, in spite of their Śaiva content, there is an undue stress on the mirror part of the above metaphor, and it is a mirror that does not reflect the world. The light of consciousness that illumines her inner reality bounces off the social structures of her material reality. Lallā's dancing is not the dancing of Śiva taking delight in his creation. Her

life experiences in fact deconstruct the metaphor of dance—she symbolically divests herself of the body that would enable her to enjoy the dance. For her, the world is indeed *māyā*, which hinders rather than helps her enjoy her insights into reality.

(Adapted from Chapters 4 & 5 of Jaishree Kak Odin's *To the Other Shore: Lalla's Life and Poetry*, Vitasta Pub, 1999.)

Concordance of Various Lallā Collections

Kak	Grierson	A. Koul	Koshur Samāchār	J. Kaul/ Kotru	Parimoo
1	98		2	5	16
2	106		1	1	4
3		13 (1930)	6	14	15
4	41		10	8	19
5	67		5	2	14
6	108		3	23	24
7		12 (1930)	4	4	17
8		13 (1932)	54k	43	
9		13 (1932)	54 kh	42	23
10	83		87	9	2
11	18		57	39	6
12	8		46	73	12
13	102		115 k	105	
14	103		115kh	105	
15	7		75	129	20
16	95		8	6	60
17	13		114	128	21
18		12 (1932)	81	75	
19	105		82	88	35
20		11 (1932)	56		
21		15 (1933)	63	25	11
22		5 (1931)	13	24	26
23	48		34	74	32
24	109		131	127	64
25	56			95	67
26	57		141	96	68
27	101		20		31
28	82		127	94	53

Kak	Grierson	A. Koul	Koshur Samāchār	J. Kaul/ Kotru	Parimoo
29	69		21	91	42
30		1 (1931)	122		
31	9		107	85	45
32	44		132	136	50
33		9 (1930)	116	125	98
34		24 (1932)	31	126	
35		19 (1932)	118	103	100
36	42		125	70	57
37		10 (1931)	29	87	
38		16 (1932)	53	47	92
39	93		133	137	101
40	96		85	10	
41	3		36	97	
42		17 (1932)	52	46	90
43	58		134	138	
44	49		35	86	37
45		12 (1933)	112	131	
46	4		27	98	33
47	76		129	102	97
48	6		79	118	52
49		25 (1930)	48	44	
50	94		14	21	27
51		3 (1930)		116	
52	97		86	11	
53	33		124	71	54
54	78		95	119	69
55	79		96	120	70
56	14		97	121	65
57	15		98	122	66
58		20 (1932)	25	63	34
59	26		23	52	30
60	1		108	133	39
61	59		110	135	47
62	22			117	49

Kak	Grierson	A. Koul	Koshur Samāchār	J. Kaul/ Kotru	Parimoo
63	16		111	83	48
64	24		68	64	
65	60		37	99	46
66	84				18
67	25		83	93	38
68	31		130	100	51
69	68		121	130	44
70	81			115	
71	87			17	
72	107		16	15	
73	23			41	
74	32		91	111	87
75	72		40	29	22
76	28		60	33	81
77		7 (1931)	64	27	80
78	27		65	30	
79	34		26	72	28
80	38		69	112	88A
81	64		78	109	77
82	5		74	132	74
83		21 (1932)	105	57	
84	61		12	49	85
85	75			101	96
86	54		101		
87		17 (1930)	67k	54	
88		17 (1930)	67kh	55	
89		27 (1932)	30	20	
90		11 (1933)	28	28	5
91	43		70	36	83
92	65		76	110	75
93	104			92	
94		5 (1930)	120	26	3
95	2		109	134	40
96	11		106	89	41

Kak	Grierson	A. Koul	Koshur Samāchār	J. Kaul/ Kotru	Parimoo
97		6 (1930)	135		73
98	55		77	108	76
99	45		43	67	56
100		16 (1930)	113	123	
101	21		55	38	7
102	29		38	76	36
103		10 (1930)	92	56	
104	51		99	77	
105	19		11	7	78
106	50		94	114	58
107	35		123	104	
108	47		93	113	59
109		20 (1930)	80		
110		20 (1930)	80		
111	17		41	66	55
112		3 (1933)	32	50	
113		23 (1932)	7	3	
114	74			13	95
115		32 (1930)	157-158	18	9
116	36		45	107	62
117		4 (1930)	51	45	91
118		10 (1933)	62	34	
119	37		22	51	84
120	62		15	22	25
121		14 (1932)	119	58	
122	80		24	80	29
123	39		42k	68	71
124	40		42kh	69	72
125	30		73	90	43
126	52		100	78	
127	66		50	16	
128	53		102	79	
129	88		33	35	
130		23 (1930)	39	59	

Kak	Grierson	A. Koul	Koshur Samāchār	J. Kaul/ Kotru	Parimoo
131	63		17	62	63
132		19 (1930)	44	65	93
133	12		66	48	86
134	71		71	37	82
135	20		58	40	10
136	10		154	61	13
137		7 (1930)	156	19	
138	77			60	
139		6 (1931)	59	31	
140		6 (1931)	59	32	
141	70			53	79
142	73			12	94
143	86			106	
144	46		104	84	61
145		31 (1930)	103	82	
146		28 (1930)	72	124	

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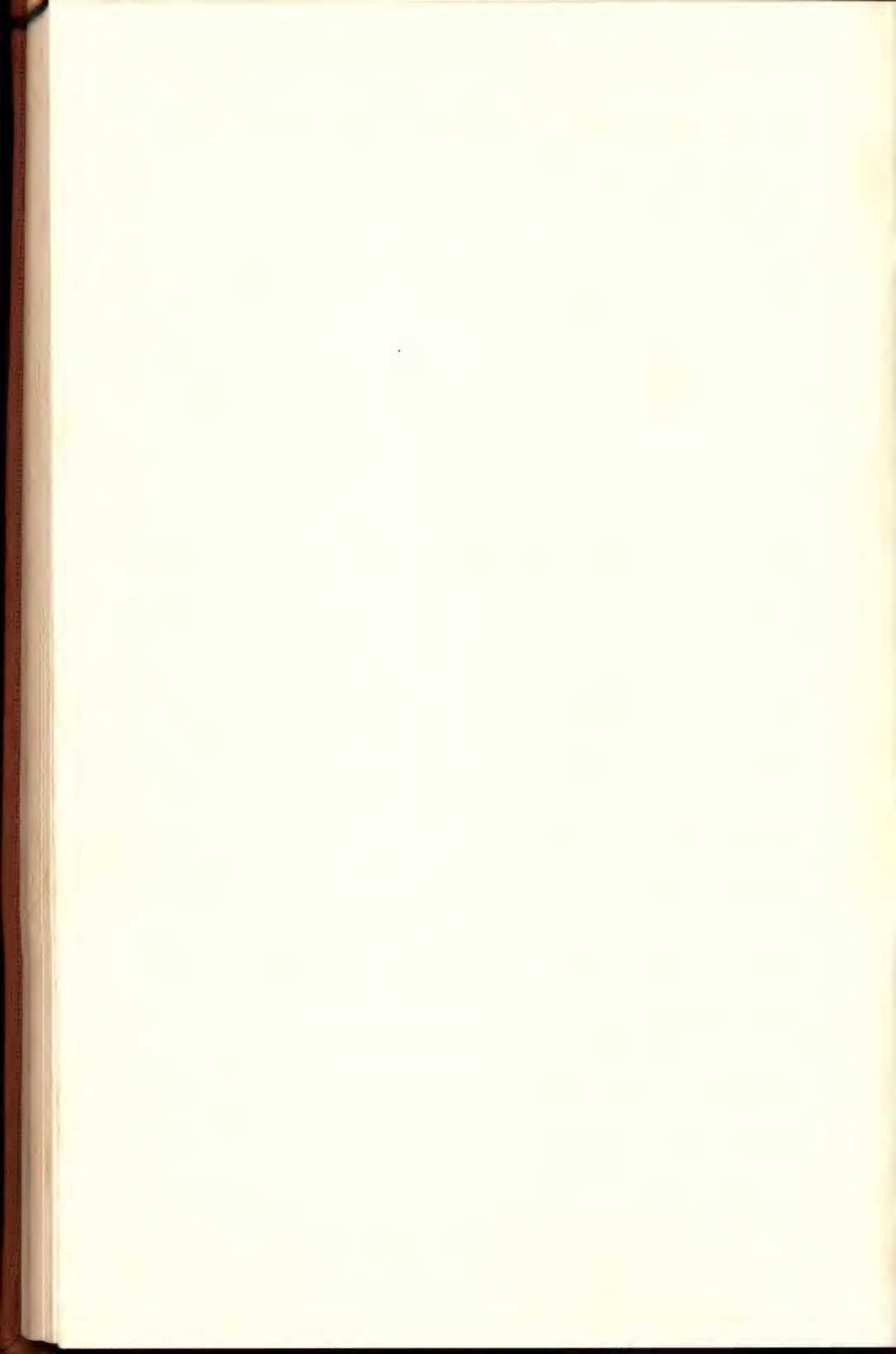
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Index

- Abhinavabhārati 206, 210
 Abhinavagupta 193, 195, 206,
 210, 220, 222, 223
 ahaṃkāra 198
 Alau-ud-dīn, Sultan 4
 Ānandavardhana 206, 220
 ānavamala 124, 195
 ānavopāya 196
 Angadi, S. M. 223
 anugraha 202
 apāna 198, 204
 ātmavyāpti 207
- Bailly, Constantina R. 220
 Bamzai, Prithivi N. K. 220
 Barks, Coleman 219
 Barnett, Lionell D. 2, 219
 Bazaz, P.N. 220
 Bhaṭṭa, Nica 4
 bhakti 12, 14, 223
 Bharata 206
 Bhavānī, Rūpa 8
 Bohm, David 209, 220
 Brahmā 93, 200
 brahmarandhra 57, 58, 90, 118,
 204
 Buddha 18, 39
- candrāvana 200
 cakra 57, 58, 61, 90, 106, 204
 Charagi, S.N. 2, 219
 Chatterji, J.C. 193, 220
- Darwēsh, Dharma-dāsa 1, 2, 3
 Dhar, Triloki N. 220
- Dhvanyāloka 206, 220
 Dhvanyālokalocana 206
 Drabu, Vishva N. 220
 Dutt, Jogesh C. 221, 223
 Dyczkowski, Mark S. G. 195, 199,
 208, 210, 211, 220, 221, 223
- Flood, Gavin 220
- Gītā 18, 160, 220
 Gnoli, Raniero 220
 Gontier, Jacques 223
 Grierson, George 2, 109, 214, 219
- Hafiz 1
 haṃsa 131, 138, 187, 198, 199
 Hasan, Mohibbul 221
 Hindu 3, 17, 122
 Hughes, John 221
- icchāśakti 196
 Ingalls, D. 220
 Īśvarapratyabhijñā 193, 194, 195
- Jainarājataranṅī 223
 jñānaśakti 196
 jñānendriyas 197
 Jonarāja 221, 223
- Kabir 1
 Kachru, Braj B. 221
 Kak, Ram N. 221
 Kak, Subhash 221
 Kalhana 221
 Kallaṭa 194

karmamala 124, 195
 karmendriyas 198
 Kaul, Jayalal 2, 4, 214, 219
 Keśava 5, 18, 39, 93, 200
 Knowles, James H. 221
 Koshur Samāchār 2, 214, 219
 Kota, Queen 3
 Kotru, Nil Kanth 214, 219
 Koul, Ananda 2, 4, 201, 214, 219
 krama 208, 222
 Kramrisch, Stella 221
 Krishnamoorthy, K. 220
 kriyāśakti 196
 Kṣemarāja 193, 195, 221
 Kumar, Pushpendra 221
 kumbhaka 124
 kuṇḍalinī 199, 223

Lakshman Jee, Swami x, 221

Madan, T.N. 221
 Mahābhārata 89
 Mahādevī, Akka 13-14
 Mahāvīra 18, 39
 Maslow, Abraham H. 210, 222
 Masson, J. 206, 210, 220, 222
 māyā 125, 207
 māyīyamala 124, 195
 Mīr, Shah 3
 Mīrābai 8, 12, 14
 Mishra, Kamalkar 222
 Muktananda, Swami 219, 222
 Muller-Ortega, Paul E. 222
 Muslim 3, 17, 122

Nāṭyaśāstra 206
 nimeṣa 193, 201
 nothingness 16, 61, 64, 75, 137,
 169, 203, 204, 205
 Nūrnāma 2

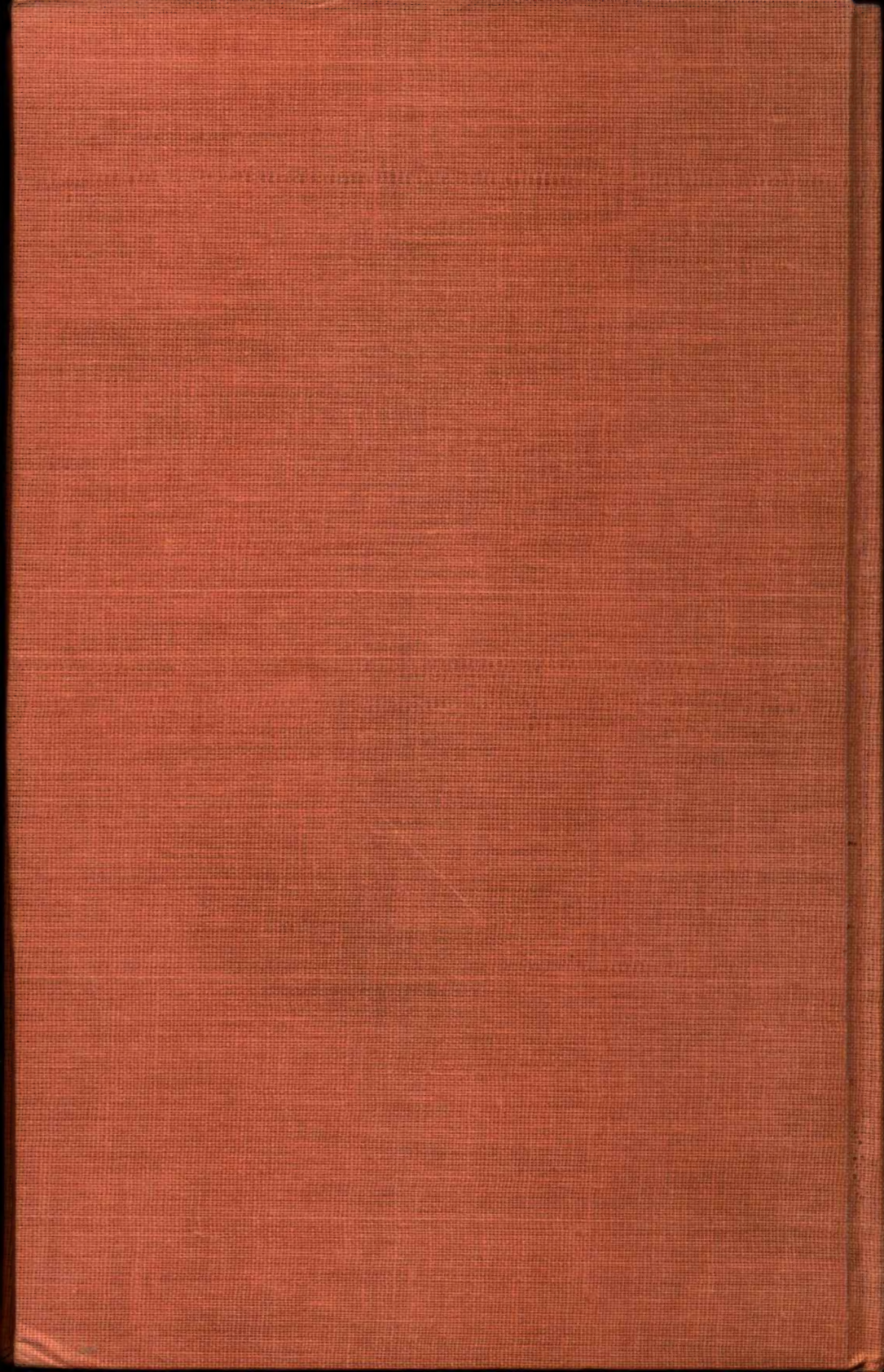
Nūr-ud-dīn, Sheikh 2, 3
 O'Flaherty, Wendy D. 222
 Odin, Jaishree K. 213, 219
 Om̐ 59, 60, 84, 94, 118, 199, 200,
 205

pañca-mahābhūtas 45, 182, 197
 Pandey, K. C. 222
 Pandit, B. N. 222
 Pandit, R.S. 221
 Parātrīṃśikā 195
 Parimoo, B.N. 219
 Patwardhan, M.V. 220
 prakāśa 64, 67, 83, 85, 148, 193
 prāna 57, 59, 198, 204
 prānaśakti 198
 praṇava 84
 pratyabhijñā 193, 195, 208
 pratyabhijñāhṛdaya 193, 222

Rafiqi, Abdul Qaiyum 222
 Rahu 99
 Rājatarāṅgiṇī 221, 223
 Rāma 18, 160
 Ramanujan, A. K. 222
 Rastogi, Navjivan 222
 Ray, S. C. 222
 Rishināma 2
 Rudra 200

Śakti 8, 108, 136, 199, 202, 207,
 208, 209, 221, 223
 śāktopāya 196
 śāmbhavopāya 196
 Śambhu 140
 Sangari, Kumkum 223
 Śaṅkara 38, 106, 167, 168, 205
 Sastri, P.S. 223
 Shakespeare 1
 Shams-ud-dīn, Sultan 3
 Shastri, J. L. 223

- Silburn, Lilian 199, 223
 Singh, Jaideva 222, 223
 Śiva ix, 8, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18,
 38, 39, 45, 46, 66, 78, 88, 92, 93,
 99, 100, 108, 122, 125, 131, 136,
 140, 145, 155, 166, 170, 172,
 189, 190, 194, 196, 197, 198,
 199, 200, 201, 202, 207, 208,
 209, 210, 211, 212, 222, 223
 Śivadṛṣṭi 193
 Śiva Purāṇa 223
 Śivastotravali 220
 Śiva Sūtra 193, 194, 196, 211,
 221, 222, 223
 śivavyāpti 207
 Somānanda 193, 195
 Spandakārikā 193, 194, 195, 204,
 207, 208, 211, 212, 221, 223
 Śrīkaṇṭha 5, 19, 193, 201
 Śrīvara 223
 Stein, M.A. 221
 sūfism 3, 17
 Sūfī, G.M.D. 223
 śūnya 16, 61, 66, 70, 94, 97, 137,
 147, 169, 203, 205
 Svachandatantra 199, 205
 Swamy, H. Thipperudra 13, 223
 Tantrāloka 193, 195
 Tantrasāra 193, 195
 Temple, Richard Carnac 219
 Tulsidasa 1
 unmeṣa 193, 201
 Utpaladeva 193, 194, 195, 220
 Varuṇa 172
 Vasugupta 194
 Vijnānabhairava 193, 198, 222, 223
 vimarśa 94, 193
 Viraśaiva 13, 100, 223
 Viśnu 54, 126, 200
 Walimbe, Y.S. 223
 Woodroffe, John 223



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